

THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY



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K. R. KRIPALANI

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The Visva-Bharati Quarterly



यत्र विश्वं भवत्येकनीडम् ॥

(Where the whole world finds its shelter.)

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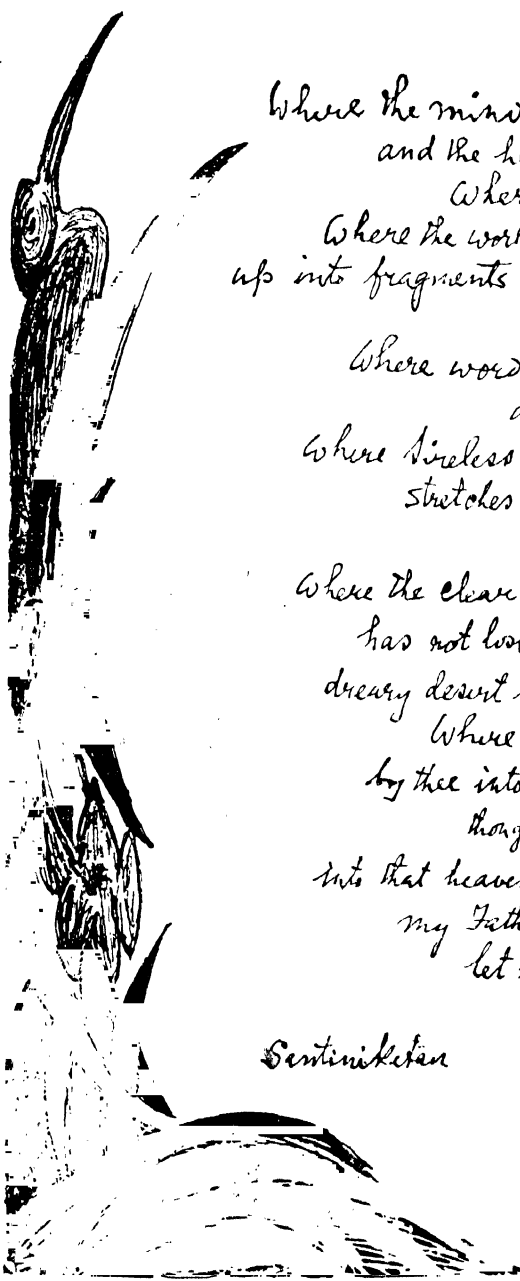
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Where the mind is without fear
and the head is held high,
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken
up into fragments by narrow domestic
walls;
Where words come out from the
depth of truth;
Where tireless striving
stretches its arms towards
perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward
by thee into ever-widening
thought and action —
into that heaven of freedom,
my Father,
let my country awake.

Santiniketan

Rabindranath Tagore

THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

May

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HYMN TO THE SUN

On board a ship I heard an Indian sing
A wild hymn, chanted slowly, to the sun :
And afterwards, I found it, or one strangely like,
With the Zend-Avesta's Sacred Book :
And this was how that wild strain ran :

I

Sing now to the undying One,
To Him, the swift-horsed Orient Sun,
As from the mountain-heights he looks afar
Over the lands where the wide pastures are !

O Mithra, Lord of Pastures,

Listen to our Song !

II

There grow sweet herbs that feed the sacred kine.
Bright-eyed they graze : their silken soft coats shine,
As He, the Lord of Life, the Lord of Light,
Looks joyously upon them from his heavenly height.

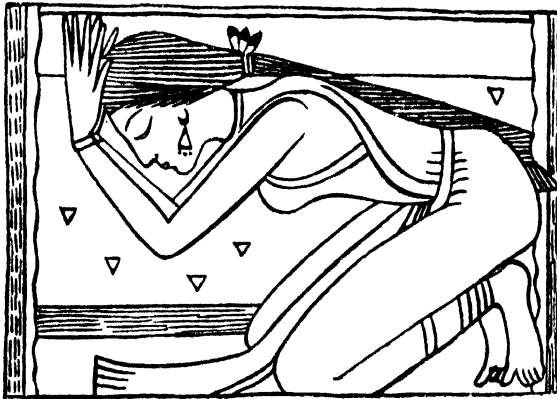
O Mithra, Lord of Pastures,

Listen to our Song !

III

Well-wall'd the houses stand beyond the meads
Where chariots wheel and halt their champing steeds
And women, beautiful, in unison
Sing, "Hail, all Hail to Thee, thou glorious One !"
*O Mithra, Lord of Pastures,
Listen to our Song !*

Ernest Rhys.



THE GREAT AND THE SMALL¹

NOWADAYS class conflicts in the West are mostly of economic origin. Miners, dock labourers, railway men, now and again, raise disturbances, for which new laws have to be made, or old laws suspended ; the militia are sometimes called out, and blood shed. In that part of the world there are two parties concerned in such conflicts—those who create, and those who try to quell, the disturbance ; there is no third party, with a high sense of humour, to look on and mock at them from outside.

There was also a time in England, whilst its constitution was still in the process of consolidation, when conflicts used to occur between Protestants and Roman Catholics, during which fair play was not always in evidence. As a matter of fact the Catholics had for long to submit to all kinds of disabilities. Even today, the subjects of England, as a whole, have to bear the cost of maintaining a particular religious denomination, which is manifestly unfair to those outside it. But if today these and other inequalities no longer lead in England to chronic breaches of the peace, it is because all sections of its people now enjoy in common a system of government that they can call their own. Had they been ruled by an outsider, all these loose joints in their system would have knocked together, making permanent fractures in it.

In the earlier history of British politics the antagonism between Scotland and England was not a little bitter, for they had real differences in language, temperament, and historical memories. But their reconciliation was brought about because the system of government at which they arrived was subject to their joint control ; wherefore their energies were turned towards common defence and welfare. On the other hand, because the people of Ireland had not been conceded equal rights with those of England, such union between England and Ireland was never found possible.

These instances of conflict in the West may partly explain, but can never wholly justify, our own national weaknesses. For it has to be admitted that in our country there is too rigid a line of demarcation between Hindus and Moslems. Where Truth is departed from, there comes in evil and with it punishment. If religion, instead of abiding

1. Translated by Surendranath Tagore from the original Bengali (*Prabasi*—1919).

in the heart, is allowed to put its emphasis on memorised texts and outward observances, it becomes the greatest of all obstacles to peace. It is possible to uphold Ahimsa as an ideal of conduct and approximate one's life to it, even though perfect following of it may not be practicable. But if we give the name of religion to injunctions laid down in some particular scripture against the killing of a particular animal, and insist on forcing the prohibition upon adherents of a different religion, then the ill-feeling thus arising can never be allayed. To slay certain animals in the name of religion, and thereupon not to hesitate to kill men because they slay certain other animals, also in the name of religion—this can be given no other name than fanaticism.

I can only hope that our religion will not for ever continue to lay such stress on external observances. Another hope is that if ever Hindus and Moslems can have a common ideal of national welfare, and that ideal can find concrete shape in some system of common government, then their external differences will become negligible compared with the unification arising out of common endeavour and fellow-feeling.

I once happened to have an Englishman as a fellow passenger in a railway compartment. Talking of the then recent Behar communal riots he told me with great gusto the story of a British captain twitting a local zamindar with the words: "You can't even control your own tenants, and yet you people want Home Rule!" I did not hear what the zamindar replied, but could imagine him saying: "No, sir, we don't want Home Rule while we are so unfit, so worthless. Meanwhile be pleased to do the controlling for us." To my companion I simply said: "These riots have not occurred during Home Rule. The mind of that hapless zamindar must have turned enviously to the troops of which the Captain had command. For one to retain the means, and another to attain the end,—this is an unheard of division of labour. Moreover, what of the communal riots under the very shadow of Fort William in Calcutta? Those surely were as much a matter of shame to the government as to the governed. Had such occurred in the Nizam's dominions, or in Mysore, the Captain's sarcasm might indeed have proved unanswerable."

Just here is our grievance. We have no responsibility for our own self-defence, because our defence has been taken off our hands by an outside power. That is what is emasculating us, making us both weak and resourceless. If the condition to which we have thus been reduced be made the occasion by this same power for sneering at us,

we are precluded, it is true, from giving any effective reply, but what we say in our own minds is far from parliamentary. If we had power and responsibility it would have been equally to the interest of Hindus and Moslems to maintain them intact ; both parties would have taken good care not to allow license to go unchecked, and India would have made strong the foundation on which she stood.

As matters are, if on the turning of the next page of India's history, the British power were to break, and leave, amidst the ruins of its strong government, millions of weak men and women,—unused to self-reliance, incapable of self-defence, bereft of self-confidence, unfit for self-improvement, while all around them would be newly awakened powers, skilfully organised in accordance with their recently learnt lessons,—then, if for a time these hapless millions are lost in confusion, on whom must be cast the guilt of their sad fate ?

Or if we make the contrary supposition, that while governments all over the world are changing, the steel frame of the British government in India will alone endure for ever, then are we to contemplate with equanimity the prospect of an India eternally disunited, with no tie between its different sections of common endeavour and public service, with all their hopes and aspirations doomed to pettiness, their faculties warped and stunted, their future hopelessly hemmed in by the stone walls of an alien policy ?

Uptill now, under British rule, we have had unified government but not unified responsibility,—that is why our union is from the outside. Such union does not bring us near, it merely keeps us side by side, so that the least shock knocks us against one another. It is an inert, material, not a live, functioning union. It is like the proximity of men sleeping on the same floor, not of men awake and marching along the same road. There is nothing in it for us to glory or rejoice in. We may stoop low to give thanks for it, but cannot be uplifted by it.

Our old society of village communities kept us alive to our public duties. No doubt the public of those days was a limited one, inasmuch as our vision did not extend beyond the bounds of our village. Still, within those bounds, the wealthy acknowledged the responsibility of their riches, the learned of their knowledge ; the whole community had a claim on the attainments of each. It is in such expansion of individual achievement that men can take pride and find their joy.

At the present day, all responsibilities of our countrymen have been shifted from within to the outside. The government is the

only appraiser of our merits, defender of our persons and property, regulator of our health and well-being, dispenser of reward and of punishment. What is and what is not Hindu, is determined in their courts of law ; even our intoxicants are provided for us by them ; and if tigers molest our villagers, that gives a good opportunity for sport to the local magistrate and his friends.

As a result, we can no longer bear the burden of our own social regulations. The Brahmin still exacts his fees, but does not advance learning. The landlord extorts his rents, but does not make the prosperity of the tenants his concern. The upper classes insist on being paid due respect by the lower, but do not look after their welfare. Our expenditure on social ceremonies is as heavy as ever, but the vast sums so spent do not circulate within the community. Communal conflict, social ostracism, the sale of religious services,—all these social evils are rampant. The cow we are feeding no longer gives us milk, but viciously turns its crooked horns on us.

But the point is not really whether government from within is more or less efficient than government from without. If men had been merely so many pieces of stone, the question would have been how best to arrange them for serving some purpose. But men must live and grow and progress. That is why it cannot but be admitted that this destruction of initiative and opportunity for self-fulfilment, that makes despondency lie heavy as stone on the breasts of our people, is not only cruel, but vitiates the true end of government.

The self-determination we hanker after is not for the sake of wielding or flaunting power over others, nor for arming ourselves to exploit weaker peoples ; nor are we obsessed with any insane desire to prove our vigour and enthusiasm for killing those who are alien to us. We are quite content to wear as our insignia the epithet of "mild Hindu" that has been conferred on us by the militarist West. We shall not flinch to bear the thorns of material loss that beset the pursuit of spiritual gain, though our rulers may twit us for it.

All we yearn for is our natural right and responsibility of serving our motherland. The soul-destroying deprivation of these is what is gnawing at our hearts and driving us to desperation. Hence the irrepressible eagerness of our youths to avail of any opportunity to serve their countrymen. Manhood cannot flourish in the shade of protected orderliness. The deepest urge of all life is to exert itself in progressing onward. In all great peoples the acceptance of toil and tribulation, the dedication of self for the sake of great enterprises,

is seen as a turbulent desire that foams and roars on its course, reckless of success or failure, removing from its path, or cascading over, all obstacles. This grand sight it is impossible to keep hidden away even from political cripples like ourselves.

That is why for our youths, in whom this life-force is naturally welling up, the torture of its being remorselessly cooped up within their bosoms is greater than the pangs of death itself. Sufficient outlet for this surging force cannot be found in volunteering for occasional flood- or famine-relief work. It is only in the various pursuits of every day life that it can find adequate room for expansion. Otherwise, its suppressed cravings become vitiated in the heat of hopeless heart-burning, giving rise to the secret violent activities that are spreading over the country. This in turn leads the authorities to view with dire suspicion any organised attempt at national self-development.

While these underground actions and reactions were going on, came the news from over the seas that a draft constitution for India was under preparation. The authorities, thought I, are at length awake to the fact that fear of persecution is not enough of a remedy,—there must be the lure of a concession as well. This country is our own country, not merely because we have been born in it, but because it claims our strenuous co-operation in the making of its history. And British sovereignty, or at any rate partnership, can be well established, within and without, only if our people are encouraged to acknowledge this deepest obligation of ownership.

Moreover, to keep this vast country weak and powerless, and apathetic to its own government, precludes its being of any account, and therefore makes it a burden heavy to bear, in times of stress. The weakest of antagonistic elements is like the tiniest of leaks in a ship. While the sea is calm, constant pumping may serve to keep it going, but when, in a storm, the hands have to be otherwise occupied, even such a rift may lead to disaster. To spend a trifle on its timely repair saves the risk of larger loss in the event of trouble. I cannot still help thinking that it was some appreciation of these facts by our navigators that had led to the proposal of Home Rule for India.

But men are blinded by their passions. The exaggerated view of the present that their passions put forward makes them careless of future consequences, and so despise any appeal to abstract morality as the outcome of weakness, of a dilettante idealism. The likelihood of such passions affecting the British people was overlooked by India, overjoyed as it was at the undreamt of prospect now held before it.

The Britishers who are in the government or mercantile offices are too near India. By reason of this nearness, it is the power they exercise, the money they make, that cover their field of view ; and the joys and sorrows, the rights and claims, of the thirty millions of India's people recede into dim, vague unsubstantiality.

So any gift implying the grant of self-determination to India, involving a diminution of British interference, is bound to be whittled down and shrunk dry before it reaches us, if it is not altogether mislaid in transit,—whence the skeletons of good intentions that strew the desert pathway of India's destiny. Those who have usurped the power of such obstruction are obsessed with their own might, their minds and hearts made impervious to the plaints of the people of India by a hard crust of racial exclusiveness. India for them means only a magnified government or merchant office.

It seems anomalous to imagine that the British should wish to keep our sight away from this grand vision of Freedom, when we consider that their own history, for the last three hundred years or so, has been one long continuous pageant of such heroic endeavour. This anomaly can, however, be explained if we take care to remember that it is not the English people known as *great* who are ruling India, but that we are the subjects of those of them who, steeped from their youth in the acid of bureaucratic tradition, have been corroded into mere official men, reduced for us to the small measure of their special purposes.

The camera may be called an artificial eye ; but, for all the clearness of its definition, it is blind ; it cannot see as a whole, it cannot see that which is not immediately before it, it cannot see movements. We are grateful to providence that it has given us eyes, and not a camera to see with. But what is this that providence has done to India ? The whole man who rules our destinies lives on the other side of the sea, but as soon as he comes over to this side, three-quarters of him are clipped off by the shearing process through which he passes. This official fragment of an Englishman cannot understand how the expensive and efficient camera that he is, fails to satisfy us ; he cannot understand what it is that makes us still pine to be looked at by a human eye.

Why are the inmates of a workhouse restless and dissatisfied ? Because the workhouse is not a whole home. It gives neither human relationship, nor outside freedom, but only strictly regulated shelter. Shelter is, no doubt, a necessity ; but, being what they are, men cannot

live without a great deal that is beyond the merely necessary, for lack of which their humanity feels insulted and impels them to keep trying to escape beyond the bounds of necessity. The workhouse guardian feels surprised and resentful at this, for his circumscribed mind lacks the complete vision to comprehend why even such unfortunate men grudge to pawn the freedom for which their souls cherish an undying hope, in exchange for the restfulness of a bare shelter.

The great Englishman has no immediate contact with India. Between him and us intervenes the small Englishman. So we only catch glimpses of the great Englishman in the sky of English literature, while the only sight he gets of us is through the reports of the bureaucratic offices and their books of account; that is to say, India is for him represented by a mass of statistics—figures of exports and imports, income and expenditure, births and deaths, how many police there are to keep the peace, how many jails there are for breaches of the peace, the lengths of railway lines, the heights of college buildings. There is no department of the India office through which the things that are far greater than all these can reach any human creature in England.

However numerous the obstacles may be in the way of our believing it, we should nevertheless know that there is such a thing as the great English race, with a real local habitation. The misjudging of the powerful by the weak is but a weakness of the latter, a weakness from which let us try to have the proud privilege of being free. It may be confidently averred that these great Englishmen are wholly and truly men. It is also certain that they could not have become great without possessing the qualities that make for greatness in all nations. However angry with them we may be, it is no use saying that all their greatness rests on their swords, or lies in their money bags. No one can point to the history of any nation that has attained glory merely because it is well-equipped for fighting, or can make money successfully. So we may dismiss the contention, without troubling to take evidence, that any nation can become great without being great in manhood. The British nation has as its ideal a belief in truth, justice and freedom. This ideal has abundantly manifested itself in their history and in their literature.

The great Englishman is not static, he is moving forward. His life is undergoing modification and expansion through his history; not only in regard to his empire and trade, but his art and science and philosophy, his society and his religion as well. He is creative, and may justly claim to be one of the high priests in the grand divine

service conducted by Europe. The lessons of the Great War are constantly causing him searching of heart, for he has there had the opportunity of viewing history afresh in the light of the sacrificial flame of a vast holocaust. He could see for himself the inevitable nemesis of allowing the self-glorification of each nation to override the claims of insulted humanity. Consciously or unconsciously, he feels that the God of the nation and the God of all humanity is one and the same, and if human sacrifice be offered in His worship, He in turn assumes the terrible form of the wrathful Destroyer.

If the great Englishman has not realised it even yet, he will realise some day that where the atmosphere is thin, there is the storm centre ; where there is weakness, thither is greed attracted, and round it rages the conflict of the strong. Where man does not stand firm on his greatness, his manhood leaks away through his relaxed moral fibre, and Satan gets his chance to mock at God. The great Englishman cannot but come to understand that it is not possible to build a permanent edifice on sand, that the power of one cannot be consolidated on the weakness of another.

But the small Englishman makes no progress. With the country that he has bound hand and foot, he himself remains stagnant, as the centuries pass by, tied to its inertness. His life consists only of two aspects, his office duties and his amusements. Through his government- or merchant-office aspect he touches the millions of India only with the tip of his punishing or measuring rod. As for his amusements, that aspect, like the other face of the moon, is ever turned away from us. So that his claim to local experience is gauged simply by the efflux of time. True, in the early days of the British Indian Empire, he was busy with creative work, but after that he has, for the rest of a long, long period, been content to watch and ward his established business and sovereignty, and enjoy their fruits.

The small Englishman has become worldly-wise by prolonged absorption in routine, and like every worldly-wise man, he has come to look on callousness as strength of mind. He has come to think that the going on of his office like clockwork is the most important event in the universe. He has a supreme contempt for the man outside, even though, for all his apparent inconsequence, he has his place appointed by the God of the universe in His grand procession through the dust of the open road. Accustomed as the Englishman in India is to deal with powerless people, he has come to the fixed conclusion, that as he is the ruler of the present, so is he the controller of the

future. He does not stop at saying, "I am here," but proudly adds, "And here I shall remain !"

Wherefore, O hapless pursuer of the mirage, do not run, cheering so loudly, to stand expectant on the West-facing shore, hugging the hope that a shipload of favours is coming to you from the great Englishman ! Mines have been laid in anticipation by the small Englishman, along the bottom of the intervening ocean, and the wreckage of the loaded vessel that will reach you may at best serve for the making of a funeral pyre for your hopes of self-determination. Our confidence in the generosity of the great Englishman has already led us to talk big to the small Englishman, forgetting that the fees of the priest often exceed the boons granted by the divinity above him. Have we not had enough experience of the unlimited power and the very limited temper of our intermediary ?

So I would repeatedly caution my countrymen: "What is it that you rely on when you venture to claim ? Your physical strength?—that you have not. The loudness of your voice?—that is not so penetrating as you imagine. Some great Englishman behind you?—where, oh where is he ! But if you have Justice on your side, place on that your whole reliance. None can deprive you of the right to suffer. The glory of sacrificing yourself for the truth, for the right, for the good of your fellow-men awaits you at the end of the arduous road. If boons you deserve, you will get them from the Dweller within."

I have always pointed out that, to endeavour to get results by wrong means, simply piles up a debt of wrong-doing that will eventually exact full payment. And as I have condemned in the severest terms the taking of such path by my countrymen, I claim the right to say, as strongly, that extremism when indulged in by the government is equally criminal. The royal road of legitimate methods may take longer to reach the destination, but the taking of a short cut like trampling over the bleeding breast of Belgium, is not justifiable for any one, high or low, in the modern age.

In the old days "off with his head" was deemed a simple expedient for saving the trouble of undoing a tangle. It is Europe that can pride itself on the discovery that such cutting of the Gordian knot damages the goods inside. Civilisation has its responsibility ; a responsibility of which it cannot rid itself even in times of difficulty. Punishment necessarily involves cruelty, that is why it has to be passed through the filter of legal processes in order to free it from all trace of personal animosity or partiality, before it can be adopted as an

instrument by civilised society. Otherwise there ceases to be any distinction between the bludgeon of a hooligan and the mace of sovereign authority.

I admit that the problem has become difficult. We are ashamed of some of the methods adopted by our boys and youths to instil the spirit of Swadeshi into our country. We are still more ashamed because the lesson—that for the sake of patriotism it is not wrong to divorce morals from politics—is one we have learnt from the West. The gold of European politics is not supposed to lose in value by any alloy of lying or trickery or brigandage, surreptitious or flagrant, but rather to be thereby hardened to greater usefulness. We also may seem to have accepted the conclusion that scrupulousness in regard to the overriding of righteousness by expediency in the case of patriotic enterprises is mere silly sentimentality. And thus have we been brought to lower our heads in reverential imitation of the remnants of savagery in our mentors. We have lost the courage and moral strength to declare with our own ancestors : “By unrighteousness men flourish ; in unrighteousness they see their good ; through unrighteousness they even prevail over their enemies ; but they perish at the root.”

We make the mistake of thinking that the path of European civilisation has arrived at the wonderful cross roads where robbery and gallantry meet. We should remember that God has not yet delivered His judgment on the merits of the path Europe has so far pursued. And I pray to Him that even should the whole world elect to be satisfied with temporary advantage in place of ultimate gain, let not India do likewise. If political freedom be achieved by us, well and good. But even if that does not happen, let us not, with heaps of tainted political rubbish, obstruct our own way to the larger freedom of the soul.

There is, however, another thing that it will not do for us to forget either. In the light of our awakened patriotism, dacoits and traitors are not all that we have seen : we have also beheld the highest bravery. Never before has the divine power of self-sacrifice been so manifested in our youths as to-day,—the youths who, renouncing all hopes of material advancement, have whole-heartedly devoted themselves to their country's cause. It is not merely that in such career they can look for no emoluments or honours from the government, but they have further to struggle against the opposition of their own kith and kin. What delights me is, that there is nevertheless no dearth of travellers along this thorny road.

When the call came from on high, our youths did not hesitate to respond to it, and an ever-growing band of devotees, with the ideal of Right as their only resource, are sturdily and steadily engaged in clearing the path of their advance, step by step. They do not delude themselves with any hope that either the small Englishman, or those of their countrymen who await the latter's generosity, will shower blessings on them, or even properly understand what they are about. In more fortunate countries, where divers paths of service to country and people spread in all directions, where there are no barriers to keep off those who would serve from the fields of service,—there, such determined, selfless, idealist youth is appreciated as the greatest asset of humanity.

Any sovereign power can, by terrorising and crushing such youth, reduce a whole country to abject quiescence,—it is only too easy to do so ; but are we not accustomed to hear that such a policy is un-English ? No greater waste of human material can be conceived than such ruthless crippling for life, on bare suspicion, of great hearts who are either altogether guiltless, or who in the rush of enthusiasm have momentarily strayed from the straight path, or who fell because in their eagerness they strove to climb too quickly ; and who, with sympathetic encouragement and guidance, could have made good use of their gifts. To leave such to the tender mercies of the police department, is like letting loose a herd of buffaloes on fields of ripening corn, with the herdsman grinning at the prospect that not a weed will be left on the land.

I have, in Santiniketan Asrama, always unflinchingly kept before me the aim that spiritual insight into the history of humanity as a whole should not for our boys be dimmed or tarnished. That is why we have never hesitated to invite devotees from the West to enrich with their lives the good work undertaken by our Asrama. We have never tried to partition off the supreme truth into compartments with high-sounding names. This, perhaps, may sometimes lead the followers of Nietzsche in our country to look on the principles we advocate as the religion of weakness, the morality of the defeated. For the situation is unnatural, with our future hopes as narrow as our present field of work, our enthusiasms as feeble as our opportunities are restricted for the expansion of our deepest spiritual feelings.

The shrunken, anaemic fruits, that are all we can raise under the shade of unbending high-officialdom, are in little request and of low price in the world market, and it is being assiduously spread

abroad that, stunted shrubs as we are, it is to our best interest to keep this shadow over us as dense as possible. The dejection of spirit thus brought about lies as a dead-weight over the inmost depths of our heart. That is why the counsel of perfection, to strive for the freedom of the soul unaffected by fear or anger, cannot find whole-hearted acceptance in our country.

And yet it is my belief that the endeavours of our Asrama to battle against these adverse factors has not been altogether in vain. For, whatever the obstacles may be, when the supreme truth is held before men, albeit the most modern of them, they cannot altogether ignore it. But at times things do come to such a pass, that even the mildest of Bengali boys feel a revulsion against high ideals. Passion rises at the challenge of passion to becloud their vision of the highest good.

If the question occurs to you : What is at the root of all this ? You cannot but agree with me that it is nothing but absence of self-government. Very far away from us are the Britishers,—even farther, say some of their globe trotters, than they feel from the Chinese and the Japanese. Then there is our spirituality, a malady that they altogether disclaim. What can be a wider gulf between man and man ? Then again, they do not know our language, nor care to mix socially with us. Where the distance is so great, the knowledge so slight, a vigilant suspiciousness can be the only policy.

In free countries the bureaucracy is not allowed to aspire to the topmost heights, so that gaps are left in its ramifications through which the people of the country can grow and flourish. In a subject country like ours the bureaucracy takes good care to leave no such gaps. And if we make bold to ask for any to be made, it rouses such a commotion in all its branches from one shore of the sea to the other, that rather than risk being battered by their buffetings we feel we had better do without them. My last word on the point is : Not the most powerful nation on earth can keep an unnatural order of things upheld to the end by the thrust of its bayonets. The weight is bound to tell more and more heavily, till at length its arms are benumbed and the gravitational pull of the world at large levels the outrage against nature to the dust.

What then is the natural order ? Every one knows that it means the responsibility of the government, whatever its system may be, to the people of the country, so that they may look on it as their own. If the government be entirely of the outside, the indifference to

it of the people is bound to lead to disaffection, and disaffection suppressed from outside festers into hatred and contempt, making the problems so arising progressively more and more complex.

Englishmen came into this country as messengers of the modern age. Each age has its own message of culture that seeks in divers ways to spread over the world. Those who are the carriers of such message, if by reason of their own selfishness they are miserly in delivering it, then by such frustration of the design of providence they give rise to evil and sorrow. It is, however, never possible for them to hide under a bushel the light they bear. The gift they hold needs must be given up, for they are but the instruments of the age that offers it.

Unnaturalness comes in when a ruling power declares the principles for which it stands to the region towards which its bright face is turned, and withholds them from the region to which it turns the dark face of subjugation. But it cannot thus delude one side of its own nature with its other side. If the small Englishman persists in trying to shut off the great Englishman from the truth, ringed round with walls of self-interest, that will only augment the evil and its consequences. In the game of making history the cards are not laid on the table, so that sometimes combinations occur, contrary to all calculations, taking the players by surprise.

The general truth may therefore be confidently stated that when, after an unnatural state of things has been forcibly maintained for long, the rulers arrive at the confident belief that the laws made by them are the only universal laws, history is liable to be tripped up in its progress by some trifling obstacle, and turn a somersault. For men to be near men during hundreds of years and yet not come into human relations ; for men to rule men and yet not make the ruled their own ; for the West to have broken down the barriers of the East, to have entered right into its granary, and yet to keep muttering the text: *The twain shall never meet*:—the world of humanity can never bear for long the insufferable strain of such immense unnaturalness. If no natural way for its removal can be found, then the curtain will fall on the last act of a historical tragedy.

In suchwise was written, during long ages, the heart-rending tragedy of our own downfall, that was acted in a previous period of India's history. We also came near to men of other cultures, but contented ourselves with endless contrivances for keeping them at a distance. We also tried to deprive them of the rights and privileges that

were most highly prized for ourselves. We also hurt universal religion by insulting men on the pretext of exclusive religion. But, for all the rigours of our shastric injunctions, we were unable to turn this unnaturalness, this prostitution of the divine purpose, into an instrument for building up for ourselves an exclusive history. Where we calculated on our strength, just there we proved to be weak, and we have thus been busy killing ourselves by inches through the centuries.

In spite of all present appearances to the contrary, I steadfastly cherish the hope and belief that East and West shall meet. But to that end we, also, have our duties and responsibilities. So long as we are small, the Englishman will remain small and try to terrorise us ; for in our smallness lies his strength. But the coming age is already upon us, when the unarmed shall dare to stand up to the fully armed. On that day the victory will be not to him who can slay, but to him who can accept death. He who causes sorrow shall go under, and he who can bear suffering shall gain the final glory. Meeting crude force with soul force, man will then proclaim that he is not beast, but has overpassed the limitations of natural selection. The duty and the responsibility has been cast on us to prove these great truths.

If the East and West do ever meet, it will be on the ground of some common ideal, not of condescension, nor of armies and navies. We must make of sorrow and death our allies. If we do not gain that strength, then as the weak we can never meet the strong. Union under one-sided rule is no union at all, but rather the most rigid separation. An empire of which we are but the materials is no empire of ours. Only such empire will be our own which we are called upon to build in co-operation. Such an empire can give us life, for such an empire we can give up our lives.

We must make peace in our strength, with others in their strength. Let not our strength be begged or borrowed ; it must be the infinite strength to suffer for Right and Justice. None in all the wide world have the power to keep bound, like an animal for sacrifice, the strength to suffer, the strength for renunciation, the strength of righteousness. Such strength gains victory by defeat, immortality by death. But the strength of muscle and material, while it tries to raise its triumphal tower to the skies, finds itself suddenly overcome by a creeping paralysis.

THE APPRECIATION OF THE UNFAMILIAR ARTS

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

WE shall begin by making two assumptions (1) implied in the title of this talk, viz. that whether by choice or accident we have before us something made by art, such as a picture or a garment, of some strange kind, let us say Egyptian or Peruvian ; and (2) that pleasure being always preferable to pain, we wish if possible to derive some pleasure from the sight of the object before us.

Now pleasure is of two kinds, either of the senses, or the mind, and as we shall want to have as much pleasure as possible, we shall desire both kinds. The two kinds of pleasure correspond to the two ways in which the "beauty" of the object can be considered. Let us consider the two pleasures separately, and how best to secure both. The physical or sensible pleasure may itself be of two kinds: direct or imagined. If the "decorative" value of the picture, or the texture of the garment pleases us, the pleasure is direct ; if the picture be a representation of someone or something dear to us, or if we think the garment actually worn would become us, it will be indirect ; and in the same way if the picture represents an activity agreeable to our moral taste or political prejudices. If we call it "beautiful" accordingly, we mean lovely, loveable, or likeable, rather than beautiful in the philosopher's sense.

On the other hand, just because the object and its qualities are unfamiliar, and it may seem to us "barbaric" or at least "odd" ; and because the works do not represent anyone or anything already dear to us, nor always such activities as we can approve of ; and because we have no immediate use for the object ; there remains a very fair chance that we may call it ugly, and not like it at all, but dismiss it as a curiosity. It was indeed from this point of view that Museums originally started, viz. as collections of "curiosities." Objects of "curiosity" value are even nowadays sometimes offered as gifts to "Art" museums, which to the would-be donor's bewilderment, decline them ; and on the other hand, "Art" museums, guided by experts, collect and exhibit as works of art many objects which the public "knowing nothing about art, but knowing what I like" still continues to regard as curiosities,—thereby missing the kinds of pleasure above referred to.

Evidently then, to secure the desired pleasure, we must learn to react to unfamiliar beauties, to enjoy new sensations, and endorse or allow activities in others which might be unbecoming in ourselves. This is one of the prices to be paid for culture ; to judge all things only by an inherited taste is precisely to be "provincial." At the same time, this does not mean that we must become eclectic, or imitators of the unfamiliar works ; that is the opposite of "culture" ; to be "influenced" implies a fundamental misunderstanding of the significance of style, and can only result in caricature. We are not to try to do ourselves what is naturally done by others ; but rather to be patient, and to recognize that what at first impresses us as merely odd may have been inevitable and right in its own environment, to respect the idiosyncracies of others no less than our own.

Most of our difficulties arise from the consideration of things torn out of their context. It may readily be granted, for example, that even the finest Egyptian or Chinese figure of a deity will be incongruously related and in this sense unlovely on the drawing-room mantelpiece or even in a museum. One who actually sees its beauty does not really see it there on the mantelpiece, but in a mentally reconstructed original environment. As Goethe so truly said, "he who would understand the artist must go there where the artist lived and worked." If we cannot literally do this, either as to distant lands or past ages, we can do so in the spirit ; it is here that the teacher of art appreciation and of the history of art ought to be of help to us, and mainly for this that our museum guides and catalogues ought to be written.

In this way then we can become "lovers of art", and not only of familiar arts ; we can learn to admire, collect, and take pleasure in the very objects which may have once repelled us. We can learn to appreciate their refinement, or charm, and to recognize the artist's sensitivity, and the elegance or vigour of his taste, and to share in part his likes and dislikes. Thus we become more universally human, and less human in a merely private fashion. But all this still remains a matter of physical or sense pleasures, or moral approbation or disapprobation ; taste has been educated and broadened, but it remains taste, rather than knowledge or judgment ; we are still playing only half the game. As Plato so well said of the mere lovers of art that "they behold and love fine sounds and colours, but beauty itself they do not admit of as having any real existence." Much the same will apply to the majority of those who labour to make themselves

acquainted with the history of art, to be able to name and recognize and distinguish and date the different kinds of art, all of which has many advantages, but may perfectly well coincide with an almost complete indifference to actual works of art as an immediate source of pleasure. It is one thing to know a great deal *about* art, and another to enjoy it when seen, and to be able to judge of the actual quality of a given work. To partake of the second and intellectual pleasure afforded by works of art, it will not then suffice to build up a broad and educated taste, nor to be very learned about art, but rather to understand its reason, in accordance with the definition, "Art is the right reason, or way, of making things."

Before we proceed to consider the second or mental pleasure which the contemplation of the unfamiliar object may afford us, we must refer to one obstacle that stands in our way, that of the style or language of a work of art. Every work of art has an import, which it expresses, and must not be confused with what the work may happen to resemble, whether intentionally or accidentally. Now to take an extreme case, and the art of words, suppose that a Chinaman wants to say the same thing that we likewise want to say, he will say it in Chinese, and we in English. It is in fact a recognized axiom, that nothing can be known or expressed except in some way. The Chinese way will be intelligible to other Chinamen, but not immediately to us; we have to learn Chinese. The difficulties are not quite so obvious in the case of the musical or visual arts. But they are nevertheless present; there is no such thing as an absolutely universal language of any art. We can indeed recognize that there are mountains or rivers in a Chinese landscape, and be interested or uninterested accordingly; but all this belongs to the matters of taste and association of which we have already spoken. What we are now concerned with is what the Chinese artist means by his mountains or rivers, which may or may not be the same that we might mean. The point is that he expresses himself in a certain way, by means of what are called "conventions", which are perfectly intelligible to his fellows, but not at first sight to us. We must then take a little trouble to familiarize ourselves with the artist's language, so that we can take it for granted, and catch his meaning as readily as do his fellows. We must learn to take for granted unfamiliar kinds of perspective, and new types of composition, so as to be able to understand without stopping to spell out every symbol in his repertoire. As a general rule we shall have at least this great advantage, that whereas in studying the works of individual

modern artists we have to learn this all over again for each one separately, in the case of Chinese or Egyptian art, the greater part of the vocabulary, or conventions of the art, are the common property of the whole school and remain fundamentally the same throughout long periods of time.

We have spoken of "meaning": not in the popular sense of what the work is "about" or what it is "like", all of which belongs to the interests of association of which we spoke at first, but in the sense of what it signifies, what it was made *for*, and what it was expected to *do* for the spectator, or rather what *he* expected to be able to do *with* it. All this makes up what is called the final cause of the work of art, its reason for being at all. This cause is the occasion moreover of what the philosopher means by the beauty of the work; viz. the clear expression of its function, by which it invites us to make use of it.

It is true that we are accustomed on the one hand to be contemptuous of subject meaning in a work of art, and on the other unaware of significance, whether in nature or art. We must however realize that in almost all other times than the present, everything has been considered not only for *what* it is, but for what it *means*. For example, not merely is the sky blue, but "The Heavens declare the glory of God." Not in a vague and sentimental way, that is, but in some specific way. The lotus or rose is not merely a charming flower, but naturally represents the ground of being. Thus we arrive at one of the most characteristic aspects of the unfamiliar arts, viz. their symbolism, or iconography, as it is called when images of deities are considered. This symbolism or iconography is then the expression of their purpose, and the immediate vehicle of their beauty; which beauty, in this philosopher's sense, has to do, not with feeling, but with knowing.

Now at last we are approaching the sources of the second or intellectual kind of pleasure that can be derived from the unfamiliar arts—a much keener pleasure than the other sort, and one that can be enjoyed regardless of whether or not the work itself appeals to our taste. The intellectual pleasure will be twofold: in the first place we shall understand what is being said, which is a greater pleasure than that of merely hearing the dulcet tones of the speaker's voice, and in the second place we shall enjoy the keen pleasure of judgment, which has been called "the perfection of art!"

It is evident that we could not enjoy these pleasures of understanding what is said, and judging whether or not it has been well said, unless we know what it was that had to be said, that is, what the work

of art was for and what the patron had in mind to do with it when he commissioned the artist, whose only business it was to make a good job of the work entrusted to him. Even if the artist is building his own house, and is thus both patron and artist, the principle remains the same. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. We cannot know if it is a good house unless we know the particular purposes it has to serve, how many people are to live in it, and so forth ; unless it fills the bill it will be devoid of formal beauty, and can only be a piece of "fine art" without relation to life, and thus entirely useless. In the same way we cannot know whether a given icon, representing the Madonna, or Zeus, is "good" unless we know something about the Madonna or Zeus idea which the patron entrusted to the artist to be embodied in paint or stone. So it will often happen that the man who is going to live in the house, or use the icon in actual devotions, will be a better judge of the art than the aesthetician, whose knowledge of the object is necessarily accidental and analytical.

Nor are the difficulties in the way of these intellectual pleasures nearly so great as might be supposed. Human nature itself provides an essential basis of agreement on fundamentals, once we have realized that our own prejudices and tastes are only of some one kind amongst others. Tastes may differ in detail but that about which tastes differ remains the same. Even the ideas to be expressed and the symbols by which they are expressed are far more alike than we suppose ; the symbols indeed are more nearly a universal language, and more nearly the same all over the world than anything else in art that we have referred to. Thus at last those very differentiations which at first interfered with sympathy become the means of mutual understanding, and being attracted by the specific beauties of one another's arts, the barriers of race and language are broken down.



I CANNOT REMEMBER MY MOTHER

I cannot remember my mother,
 only sometime in the midst of my play
 a tune seems to hover over my playthings,
the tune of some song that she used to hum
 while rocking my cradle.

I cannot remember my mother,
 but when in the early autumn morning
 the smell of the *shiuli* flowers floats in the air
the scent of the morning service in the temple
 comes to me as the scent of my mother.

I cannot remember my mother,
 only when from my bedroom window
 I send my eyes into the blue of the distant sky
I feel that the stillness of my mother's gazing on my face
 has spread all over the sky.

Rabindranath Tagore

*Translated by the poet from the original Bengali
(Shishu Bholanath—1922).*

A PICTURE OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Kshitimohan Sen

INDIA has always been animated by an eager desire for wisdom, and in the Upanishads and other ancient records we find ample evidence of the keenness with which knowledge was sought in those days. We also come to know of a succession of renowned teachers, with different systems of philosophy, living in the several forest hermitages, where women also had free access. At that time, moreover, we get glimpses of the rise of Kashi, Videha, Panchala and other places as centres of popular culture—fit seats for the future universities.

And, in fact, Jain and Buddhist monastic universities later came to take the place of the forest hermitages. Both in the previous age, with its characteristic quest for Brahma, and in the succeeding secular age of Buddhism, the educational methods were alike based on spiritual rapport between teachers and pupils, of whose livelihood the entire burden was borne by the people at large ; knowledge not being looked upon as a commodity to be bought and sold by individuals, but as an achievement of common endeavour.

With the decline of Buddhism in India these Buddhist universities also decayed. Thereupon the work of teaching was carried on, much in the same way, by teachers belonging to the Shaiva, Shakta, Vaishnava and other sects, in their respective seats. Eventually the culture, so handed on, found refuge in institutions known as Chatuspathis, wherein the torch of our ancient lore has been kept alight during the last few centuries.

The imparting of knowledge continued to be looked upon as one of the most important of religious observances ; and so, as in the case of centres for the distribution of food to the hungry and water to the thirsty, the foundation of a Chatuspathi for the maintenance of a teacher as well as a free teaching establishment, was accounted a meritorious act by the wealthy. Life in these Chatuspathis was mellowed by the reverence of the pupils for the teachers, and love for the pupils of the teachers and their wives ; it was outwardly meagre, but full of an abundant vitality within. Of this life how few of us know anything at all to-day ?

Somewhere about 1800 A.C. an Englishman named W. Ward wrote a book entitled *History, Literature and Mythology of the Hindus*.

Though the author appears to have had but scant sympathy with Hindu culture, he nevertheless refers with respect to these Chatuspathis as colleges, and enumerates eighty-three of them in Kashi, and over a hundred in Navadwip, Calcutta and its neighbourhood, omitting East Bengal and Mithila of which he seems to have had no knowledge. He has naturally described only their external features, it not having been possible for him to have any acquaintance with their internal affairs.

When in the middle ages, the pristine light of wisdom that had illuminated Kashi became dim, attempts were made, chiefly by two remarkable widowed queens, Ahalya Bai of Southern India, and Rani Bhabani of Bengal, to revive its lustre by founding new Chatuspathis. And, as a result, 360 teachers' houses, with lands sufficient for their upkeep, came to be endowed by each one of them, thus procuring for Kashi the services of so many excellent pandits, whereby it was able to gain new life, besides a number of free dormitories for the pupils. The deeply learned successors of these pandits have, to this day, kept alive the spiritual inheritance of India. In what extreme poverty these devoted teachers live and work, very few have any idea : in such contrast is it with the flourishing temple priests—the *pandas* and others—who fatten on the gifts of blind present-day religiosity, dragging down the devotees on whom they thrive to the depths of their own degradation.

Anyhow, even today there are any number of Chatuspathis in Kashi, situated in its several sections, each section being under or affiliated to a particular temple, as its *antargriha*. The old rule was that the pandits belonging to the different *antargrihas* should meet together from time to time, in order to apportion the times and subjects of teaching between themselves, so as to bring about a co-ordination of their work ; and the pupils were thus enabled to take up the subjects in which they were interested by attending in turn the lessons given by different specialists ; each period being indicated by the ringing of the bell of the temple concerned.

In spite of the poverty in externals, the heart-felt relations between the teachers and pupils, and the numerous festivals that punctuate the course of the year in Kashi, keep its academic life from becoming dry. True, subjects like formal logic and grammar have but little interest for others than the students proper, but lessons from the *Puranas* and other devotional *shastras* are also daily given in an appealing manner, suited to outsiders as well, so that the

principles inculcated may be reverentially accepted and assimilated in their lives by a wider audience. A living connection is thus kept up, quite naturally, between the learned and the laity. It would be well worth our while, even in these modern days, to study the working of such indigenous educational institutions in Kashi and other places of pilgrimage.

In Bengal the teacher's own dwelling house used to serve as a Chatuspathi, in which the students also lived during the period of their studies. The master was a father to his pupils, and his wife was as a mother. The peaceful life of the village that went on around them kept their minds and hearts full of human interest. Though teachers and pupils were alike poor in material resources, the store of love and wisdom in their little households was full to overflowing. So attached did the pupils become to what was for them a veritable *alma mater*, that when the time came for their return to the homes of their parents, they were moved to tears.

The master would sit at meals with his pupils as well as his own children, and his wife would make no difference in the helpings she served to them. The pupils would rather freely pester her with all kinds of affectionate importunities, like as petted children do in their own homes. If any newcomers hesitated to do likewise she would remark : "They still look on us as strangers !" As a consequence, the feeling of belonging to the master's own family, and the spiritual and intellectual lineage thus established endured through generations. Among the various touching stories of village life that have become traditional, these relations occupy a large place. It is a great pity that such stories are all but forgotten now-a-days.

I still remember the wife of such a teacher of Bikrampur, who came of a well-to-do family and, being unused to such strenuous house-keeping, at first felt put out by the goings on of her husband's pupils. When the Pandit's mother saw this, she admonished her thus : "Look here, my daughter, these children have left their own fathers and mothers to come to us. This is now their home. Let them look on themselves as children of the house, and bother you with their demands : it will help them to forget that they are away from their own homes." This good lady herself, in her old age, told me this story of her youthful impatience by way of deploring her own shortcomings.

In Kashi there was a teacher named Keshava Shastri, a Maharashtra pandit. He was a childless widower, and his sister, who kept

house for him, was called Aunt by his pupils. He was a pandit of great renown, and presents of sweetmeats and other dainties used to be constantly coming in from all quarters, with which his larder was always full. If we ever neglected to do our part in looting these stores, our "Aunt" used to complain : "What are the children coming to these days ?—they can't make themselves at home. In the old days my pots never could be kept full so long !"

This was the kind of feeling that prevailed in all the teachers' households. After my return home from Kashi a report got abroad that I had died. When the news reached Kashi that this was not true, one of my old teachers wrote asking me to pay them a visit. And I can never forget the unaffected joy that my arrival occasioned—how all the old venerable teachers flocked round me, like fond mothers, stroking my head and body, blessing and caressing me as a long lost son !

The love in the hearts of these worthy pandits was only equalled by the depth of their learning and their devotion to duty. Young Dhundaraj, son of the world-famous Gangadhar Shastri, was a great friend of all the pandits' pupils. The poor boy suddenly died after a short illness, without our knowing of it at the time. But our Pandit took his class as usual, though we noticed that he looked aged and worn. After lessons we went about calling for Dhundaraj, where-upon his father remarked : "He is gone where your voices will not reach him." The Pandit said this so quietly that at first we could not understand. When at length his meaning dawned on us, one of us exclaimed : "But why, Sir, did you not stop our lesson ?" "How could I, my son ?" replied he. "So many of you have come from far-off places. I have no right to waste your time. My sorrow is my own affair. But this search for knowledge belongs to all of us, and it would be wrong of me to impede its progress." His simple steadfastness staggered us.

The reverence of pupil for teacher was such as we can hardly realize in these modern times. We were waiting one day in Gangadhar Shastri's class for our lessons to begin. He had not yet come out of his own room. Meanwhile came up a very old pandit who was unknown to any of us there. We received him with due ceremonial reverence, offering him water to wash his feet. When Gangadhar Shastri appeared, seeing one so much his senior, he advanced to do him reverence, but was stopped by the visitor, who said : "Wait a moment. It is for you first to decide whether I am in a position to

accept your reverence. I was a student-brother of your revered father. I had to leave Kashi to take up the duty of interpreting the Hindu dharmic code to a Raja, leaving my studies unfinished. I now return after a long time, to find in you the only person left to whom the wisdom of our Guru has descended. So I have come to ask you to complete my instruction. Thus you see, though as your father's brother-student I may claim your respect, you are, on the other hand, about to become my teacher. Can I then accept your reverence?" Gangadhar Shastri replied : "It is long since I lost my father. I count it great good fortune that his brother should have come to me, and cannot let this chance of doing him honour go by. And yet you ask me for instruction,—a request that should never be denied. Be pleased, then, to stay with me for three days as my honoured guest, accepting my reverence. Thereafter, since such is your pleasure, you shall take instruction from me." Thus three days passed ; and on the fourth, the old pandit took his place among the students, sheaf of grass in hand as a symbol of studentship, making the full reverential prostration at the end. This picture of reverence remains engraved in my memory.

Another distinguishing characteristic of the Chatuspathi was its atmosphere of purity. In our later village schools, the panthashalas, bad language and personal chastisement by the schoolmaster was the rule ; how this came to be so, I have no idea. But from this kind of vulgarity the Chatuspathis were absolutely free. If, in the course of his exposition, any vulgar word happened to escape the Pandit's lips, the lesson was at once stopped, and resumed only after the teacher had rinsed his mouth and undergone an inward purification. If the lapse from the standard of decent language was of a grave character, the class was discontinued for the day, and the teacher began his lessons next day after a ceremonial purificatory bath and inward purification.

I am reminded in this connection of Pandit Kali Shiromani of Bikrampur, a contemporary of my grandfather's, whose knowledge of our religious shastras was unrivalled. One day, as he was crossing the courtyard of his house on way from the inner apartment to the teaching room, he happened to overhear some of his pupils engaged in coarse jesting with one another. They, of course, were unaware that he was passing by their door. Addressing a dog that was lying in his path the Pandit said : "Will you be pleased, sir, to move out of my way!" Wondering whom the Pandit could be talking to, the boys came out to find him thus accosting the dog. Looking up at their

amazed faces, the Pandit continued: "I could have got this dog out of my way be abusing him. He would not have objected to my language. But if I indulge in that kind of speech, I may some day so forget myself as to use it where I should not. It is not always possible to adjust one's mind differently in different connections. So one cannot be too careful to prevent such lapses." The boys took the lesson to heart with heads hung in shame.

In no Sanskrit or Prakrit book do we find any reference to abusive language or physical chastisement used by teachers to pupils. So we may confidently conclude that in no age and in no part of India was the relationship between the teacher and the taught sullied by impurity. The relations, as I have said, were invariably of love on the one hand and reverence on the other. The wisdom that was imparted by the *guru* in such an atmosphere, naturally and easily found its way into the minds and hearts of his disciples. Just as food for the body requires conditions favourable to the action of the digestive juices, so does food for the mind depend upon a proper emotional state for its assimilation.

I will not indulge in more anecdotes. I trust I have said enough to give an idea of what our Chatuspathis were like. But, full of reverence as I am for them, I do not say that nothing now requires to be done about them.

The *guru* of the old days, poor though he was, was in no wise lacking in prestige. Now-a-days he has lost the respect and support of his community and has to go a-begging for recognition which, even so, he fails to get either from Government, or persons in authority, or men of wealth and influence. He has consequently come to be looked down upon. Thus to demean and insult those who are the repositories of our ancient culture, and from whom alone its resuscitation may be hoped for, is hardly a wise thing to do. We may be poor and unable to offer adequate largesses, but if we fail even in the giving of due respect, how can we expect to obtain the services of the worthy? And without the help of teachers who are worthy, how can we expect to make any advance in our pursuit of wisdom?

We must bestir ourselves to free our Chatuspathis from the burden of the obstacles that are clogging the progress of our future striving. We must throw open their doors to all seekers after our ancient wisdom, irrespective of sex or caste or social distinctions. For, like light and air and open sky, should not the realm of the spirit be equally accessible to all men?

Nor do I say that the subjects that used to be taught in our Chatuspathis are sufficient even to this day. The course of life has now become the battle of life. The time has come when we cannot afford to neglect any resource that may help us along, be it indigenous or foreign : we must not encourage a suicidal policy of any kind whatsoever. We must bring to our aid every kind of training, scientific or philosophic, historical or artistic, from wheresoever it may be available. We must rid our pursuit of wisdom, our field of endeavour, from the bondage of all narrowness of tradition or superstition ; for in bondage is death.

During the last European war, science was requisitioned to look about for new sources of food. Food-stuffs may be new, but the process of assimilating them is unchangeable. Even so, though we should be prepared to accept new knowledge, that can be no reason for ignoring our age-long methods of giving and taking it. The scientific knowledge of Europe is now necessary for us, but if we try to receive it in the European way, our mental health and powers may be ruined. Our time for study was morning and evening, the middle of the day being the time of rest. Our teaching institutions were near at hand, and the walk to and fro, twice a day, was a matter of no difficulty. Now the inconvenient mid-day hours have been fixed in the case of teaching institutions, and the trouble of going and coming has largely increased. Further the masonry buildings which have replaced the old thatched pavilions under the shade of trees, are both hotter and more expensive. So the pupils suffer both in health and pocket.

When, in the old days, Greek Astrology and other foreign lore came into our country from the outside, they found refuge in the Chatuspathis, whence they easily gained living entry into the country at large. So numerous, however, are the problems that confront us today, that the traditional scheme of studies of the Chatuspathi is not wide enough to include them. If in the pride of our ancient glory, we should obstinately insist on maintaining the old narrow exclusiveness and thereby deprive ourselves of all opportunity of arriving for ourselves at modern solutions, we shall simply be courting the death penalty. On the other hand, if dazzled with the glamour of modernism, we should decide to abjure our old natural methods of assimilating truth, how can we hope to furnish ourselves with the wealth of knowledge lying available throughout the world to-day ? We can never make good the loss of allowing the methods elaborated to suit our land and people through ages of culture, to die out.

It is therefore necessary to widen the field of our Chatuspathis so as to enable them to take into their scope all the knowledge and science in the world, thereby freeing their study from the mechanical methods of the West, and humanising them through the loving relations between guru and disciple there prevailing. If we can thus graft the new culture on the old stock it will not only become living for us, but bear flower and fruit for all the world, of a rare value hitherto unknown.

In the old days, both because of the loving atmosphere within the Chatuspathis, and the congenial atmosphere in the society at large, the affinities between the teachers and the taught were freer, closer and more naturally established, with the result that the burden of teaching and learning was carried lightly. It was as easy to learn Sanskrit in Kashi as it is to learn English in England. The gifts that the Chatuspathis had to offer were eagerly accepted with such relish because of their natural connection with the life of the day. In Europe, similarly, because Western science lives and grows with the life and growth both of the teachers and the taught, it has not to be learnt as a task. That is why the very science that gives new vitality and strength to the peoples of Europe, only serves more and more to break down the health of our students day by day. And while in the West they are ever richly creating afresh, the dullness of mechanical repetition is all that falls to our lot.

Our country is poor. It is not possible for the large mass of our people to afford to maintain expensive educators with whose minds their minds have no living connection. If our easily satisfied teachers of the Chatuspathis learn of the stores of knowledge in other lands, and yet maintain their own simple way of life and their loving relations with their own people as of old, then only will the problems confronting our cheerless, penurious land find a natural solution.

Lastly, we must now replace Sanskrit in our Chatuspathis with our mother tongues. They must be made the media of the new instruction. Then only as before will our people come into living and enduring relations with the subject matter that is sought to be imparted to them. The purely intellectual relation has to be made vital by sympathy.

AN INNOCENT VISITOR

H. W. Nevinson

It was bitterly cold, and I sat cowering over my electric stove, glad of a short leisure time for reading and typing a few letters, when suddenly a strange figure appeared and entered my room unannounced.

He was dressed in the style of about eighty years ago—a long frock coat, with embroidered waistcoat, striped trousers, and a flowing necktie. He wore side-whiskers cut in the “mutton chop” manner, and in his hand he held a very tall top-hat, rather battered, as we see in the old pictures of Dickens’ stories. He bowed, with apologies for the intrusion, and said the intense cold of the last few days must have roused him from a pleasant sleep which he had been enjoying in a small hut upon a mountain side in an almost unknown part of England. He spoke like a highly educated man, but said he had forgotten his name, though he thought it began with Rip.

My wireless instrument was playing a piece of modern music with saxophone accompaniment in the new American rhythm called “crooning.” “What atrocious noise is that ?” he said as he sat down. “And where on earth does it come from ?”

“Oh,” I answered, “that is the wireless, and through that box it comes from Paris on wave-lengths.”

“What a miracle !” he cried. “Do you mean that the whole air is full of sounds that might be beautiful, though this is not ? Why, we might be hearing the best music—Mendelsohn or even Beethoven ! Could that be possible ?”

“Yes,” I answered ; “But the chief practical use is for signaling to battleships and other vessels of the fleet, telling them where they may expect the enemy in various ports of the ocean. It is also very useful in directing the armies on land, and it has far surpassed the old method of telegraphing as a guide to the destruction of the enemy’s troops. It is, I think, the most marvellous invention of our times. Quite a glorious adaptation of heaven’s lightning ; of inexpressible service in war.”

Just at that moment we heard a loud buzzing in the air, and an aeroplane flew overhead.

“Oh, what is that enormous bird ?” cried Mr Rip. “I never saw an eagle half that size !”

"That is only an aeroplane," I said. "We invented that trick of flying over land and sea more than thirty years ago, and now the aeroplanes are common as dirt."

"And can you really fly like birds through the air ?" cried Mr Rip ; "How magnificent that must be ! Mankind has always longed to fly."

"Why, yes," I answered. "We can fly to the Cape of Good Hope in about three days, and we have a regular flying post to India. But the greatest service of this extraordinary invention is to drop explosive and incendiary bombs upon the enemy. Often they are filled with deadly gas, which will choke or poison whole cities within a few hours, so that no man, woman, or child can escape, and victory is assured by the extinction of the enemy's population."

"You fill me with wonder and overwhelming horror !" said Mr Rip. "I thought non-combatants went free even in war."

"Oh, dear no !" I replied. "One of the most useful services to which aeroplanes can be put is the bombing of quiet villages scattered over the enemy's country, though of course great cities like London or Paris or Berlin or Rome make more suitable targets. For the destruction of the enemy is then more complete. A few squadrons of aeroplanes with bombs would burn Berlin to the ground, and lay the whole population dead. This is another of our greatest inventions."

Mr Rip paused in astonishment, and his horror evidently increased.

"Perhaps you would like to hear also of another great triumph over the forces of nature," I went on. "We have invented a boat which can swim far under the surface of the sea."

"That is a queer method of fishing," said Mr Rip. "I suppose you use it for the capture of whales ?"

"Not exactly that," I replied. "We use it entirely for the destruction of the enemy's fleet. You see, the submarines, as we call them, carry largish guns and torpedoes that speed under the water and will sink the largest battleship in a few minutes without chance of rescue. You see, a few submarines, armed with guns and torpedoes and attended by a squadron of aeroplanes dropping explosive bombs will satisfactorily wipe out a fleet twice as big as ours without much effort or expenditure. This also is a marvellous invention ranking with those I have already mentioned."

Mr Rip stared at the fire in amazement Then he said:

"What you tell me fills me with gloomy apprehension for the

whole of mankind. It seems to destroy all hope of advance and all the slow process of civilisation. But could not the world agree not to make use of these marvellous instruments of destruction?"

"That has been tried," I said, "but hitherto quite in vain. Indeed, I have not exhausted the methods we have devised for killing our enemies. Guns have been constructed to carry explosive and incendiary shells for more than twenty miles. Light tanks are used to run over roughish ground at a speed of thirty miles, and these will shortly take the place of cavalry with excellent effect, and they will in the end be cheaper than horses. And, again, we have invented barbed wire to check the advance of infantry. For the men struggling to cut their way through it are caught and entangled in the spikes, and make an easy mark for the rifles of the other side. I myself have seen scores of bodies hanging in the wires till they rotted away after dying in agony from pain, hunger, and thirst. Barbed wire must be reckoned as one of the most effective military arms. And we must not forget the machine guns, which will sweep down whole companies of men as a scythe cuts grass."

"But all these methods of warfare must cost a deal of money," said Mr Rip, in great perplexity.

"Of course," I answered, "we have to pay a lot. The present Government, for instance, is now issuing a loan for £280,000,000 to fill up the gaps in the nation's defence, and the interest on the loan must be paid by the ordinary citizens of the country, besides the ordinary expenditure of over £100,000,000 for the ordinary services of Army, Navy, and Air. That is the price that we pay for security, and the country must be made secure. All other nations are piling up arms in the same manner, and this vast increase in arms certainly tends to war, for what is the good of such expensive armaments unless you use them?"

"But is not Europe still a Christian continent?" asked Mr Rip.

"I have been told so," I replied, "but the clergy are very patriotic, and when war breaks out they bless the soldiers and sailors. One Bishop at least was brave enough to put on khaki uniform, as though anxious to go to the front in the last great war. We keep up the cemeteries of the men who were killed, marking the graves with little wooden crosses to show we are Christians. About ten million of the best young men in Europe were killed in that last great war."

"But why on earth did they want to kill each other," Mr Rip

asked, puzzled beyond measure. "Why did they hate each other so terribly?"

"Oh, they didn't hate each other at all," I said.

"Then why did they fight?" he asked again.

"That is too difficult a question for this afternoon," I replied, and saying that he would go back and sleep again in his quiet hut, he bade me goodbye.



THOUGHTS ON CO-EDUCATION*

Surendranath Tagore

IN inviting you to follow my line of thought in regard to co-education, I make no apology for putting my case from the viewpoint of the first person singular, because, I take it, in this kind of symposium it is a personal contribution that is wanted from each of us.

Let me, therefore, first set out the things that the word education brings to my mind. As I understand it, education means, in general, bringing out and assisting to fullest growth the faculties and powers with which each individual is endowed and, in particular, it includes appropriate exercises for the strengthening of these, imparting of useful or interesting information, and furnishing with the means of self-expression and inter-communication with fellow-men through language and art. I can see nothing in this list which is not as necessary for one sex as it is for the other, or in respect of which the same methods will not serve for both ; it is only in the case of domestic or vocational training, which are beyond our purview, that the need for sex specialisation at all comes in, so that the nature of the educational process with which we are here concerned clearly does not demand any separation of the sexes.

The problem, consequently, is not one of education, but of sex. It presents itself to me thus: What is there for or against our boys and girls meeting each other, interchanging ideas, being of mutual help in their common studies, while attending an educational institution, that is to say, during the period of their lives when their characters are being developed and formed ?

So far as my own experience goes, there can be no question that beneficent spiritual forces are brought into play in the cultivated human (as distinguished from the natural barbaric) world by reason of sex differentiation. What harm is there in harnessing some of these forces in the cause of speeding up our education ? The mutual stimulation and uplift resulting from a co-operation between the sexes, the zest added both to work and play done by them together, are too well known to need illustration. The soil of educational institutions, moreover, is

* Delivered as a lecture under the auspices of the New Education Fellowship during the Bengal Education Week, Calcutta, 1936.

specially suited to the growth of friendship, the fairest flower that blooms in our world, and this loses none of its value, but rather gains in colour and fragrance when occurring between opposite sexes ; and further, in the latter case, the chances are increased of its leading to marriages on the basis of *saha dharma*, a true spiritual mating, by which the society to which such couples belong may shine in fuller lustre, and of which may be born the best specimens of the race.

This picture, to my mind, fits all countries including our own. But I have enough of sympathy in my composition to feel my orthodox opponent's shiver of consternation. "What !" I can hear him exclaim, "You calmly invite us to admire the possibility of the free intercourse of the sexes such as may lead to matrimonial connections without scope for parental choice, devoid of regard for social bars, destructive of the modesty that ornaments our women, subversive of the very structure of our society !" The holy alarm registered by my suppositious opponent warns me that there is some clash of ideals between us. Anent our present subject the clash seems to be of two of these: the ideal of Caste and of Womanhood. So be it. I accept the gauntlet. I will not, however, risk your displeasure by playing the aggressor, but will content myself with a defence of my own position.

As claiming clanship with the ancient rishi Shandilya (may his *gotra* never grow less !) I am a staunch believer in *Varnashrama Dharma*, but, on the other hand, being also the descendant of a modern Maharshi who has delivered his posterity from the trammels of present day orthodoxy, I am equally strong in my detestation of *Jati bheda*. *Varna* means colour,—not colour of the body, but of the character,—namely, temperament ; an *ashrama* is the common refuge of a group ; *dharma* is that which binds together, or upholds ; so that *Varnashrama Dharma* signifies for me the mutual support and power derived from the formation of social groups, in accordance with temperamental characteristics, that is to say, according to similarity of ideals, tastes, manners and, in general, of the mode of life. That is exactly what I expect will be the effect of co-education and of the friendships and alliances resulting therefrom. On the other hand, *Jati bheda*, as now obtaining, amounts to the artificial and permanent segregation of individuals, however temperamentally alike they may actually be, on the ground of the accident of their birth, the lines of demarcation rigidly maintained with all the hostility which orthodoxy has recently displayed. And nothing would please me better than to see not only such, but all lines of irrational separatism, as needless as they are harmful under our

present conditions, obliterated, as obliterated they are bound to be, by any form of education worthy of the name.

As for Woman, she, we are cautioned, will lose her womanly modesty by engaging in equal contest with masculine intellect. I am not aware that the erudite Gargi, of respected memory, is dubbed immodest or unwomanly because she dared to beard the Rishi in his den. So I am inclined to suspect that my opponent's lurking fear really is, that the co-educated girl, when she becomes a wife, may decline to be the humble servant of her lord and master.

Drudging and cooking the livelong day ; pleasurable reading tabooed as waste of time ; going out for an airing rebuked as an excuse for gadding about ; motherhood lauded to the skies, though the mother has no idea of training her progeny to become good citizens, and even though she may lose health and life itself in being made to bear more children than the father has the means of rearing ;—here is a type of ideal womanhood for you, if ideal you care to call it. As for me, I freely admit that if this is to be perpetuated, co-education is the worst possible thing ; in fact, nothing short of no-education will serve.

Do I then propose that our women should be turned into *mem-sahibs* ? Horrid suggestion ! I, with the line of rishis behind me,—Shandilya, Asita, Devala,—am I to be accused of holding a brief for Westernism ? No. I see no reason to go abroad for our ideals when we have good old Vyasa, Editor of the Mahabharata, as our mentor ; and the conception of Womanhood he offers for our edification is what appeals to me.

Said Ganga Devi to king Shantanu, when he made advances to her : “Your fancy leads you to do me the honour to desire me. But I am entrusted by the gods with the mission of bringing certain children into the world under the best possible auspices. I will be your consort in your kingly duties and accept you as worthy to be their father by virtue of your illustrious lineage and your excellent upbringing, so long as by your conduct you do not frustrate the fulfilment of the divine purpose of which I am in charge. Should you ever do so, I shall at once leave you.” And she was as good as her word !

Here, in a nutshell, our sapient Rishi indicates the considerations which should lead a woman to accept a proposal, the conditions on which she should continue to live with the mate of her choice, and finally the contingency in which she should insist on separating from him. I have the pleasure to commend this ancient Aryan ideal to

believers in our old culture. Unless our girls are given an opportunity, such as they can get in the field of co-education, of forming their own pre-nuptial opinion of the mere male, can they ever be expected to think, feel and speak out like Ganga Devi ?

So far I have been thinking and speaking of cultivated human character. There is, of course, always the danger of man's natural animal propensities obtruding themselves where they should not, leading to undesirable manifestations of sorts, such as no one, whatever his ideals of society may be, can view with equanimity. Well, I cannot but admit that the original animal does unfortunately now and again raise its head in human concerns, and is nothing but a nuisance in whatever connexion it may happen to do so. Even rishis like Vishwamitra and Parashara were unable to escape improper sexual entanglements. The question of how to train man's mind, to regulate his social sanctions, so as to enable his natural appetites serve as his friends, not make them work as his enemies for his downfall, is beyond our present scope. But there is this much to be said for co-education, that an educational institution, where other and larger interests habitually occupy the mind, is the last place in which animality is likely to be rampant.

Rather, in this respect, the greater culprit by far is the influence of our usual kind of home life with its persistent over-sexing of woman. On the one hand, she is enjoined to shrink and cower and hide away from men, even in the case of certain members of the family, for fear of the consequences of her sex appeal. On the other hand, she is encouraged to cultivate all the arts and wiles necessary to win her prospective husband and keep him attached to her. In effect, the poor girl is first of all deliberately trained to look on herself and behave as a *kamini* and then for reward she is bracketed with *kanchan* as poison to be shunned by the man who would ascend the religious ladder ! What is still more curious, even *sannyasins*, who are supposed to dwell in the storey above sex distinctions, say the same thing. Can they not have heard of the dark regions awaiting those who thus insult the Eternal Feminine (*Avidya*), of which the Rishis of the Upanishads have warned us ; or is it that they are merely reluctant to preach counter to lay obsessions ?

Alas for the land of Aryavarta, that within its sacred fold both *nara* and *nari* should not be brought up to know how small a part of their significance is concerned with gender,—of which, moreover, the functioning requires to be governed by considerations of hygiene

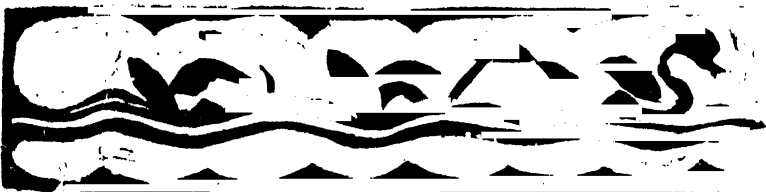
and economics,—and that the vastly important thing for them is, to realise that they are co-ordinate elements of Narayana and as such their highest duty and joy should be to equip themselves for co-operating, with equal efficiency and in mutual amity and esteem, in the fulfilment of His grand design. It is as a means to this end that I am in favour of co-ordination, conducted with the requisite ideals kept clearly in view.

In conclusion I would like to make it up with my imaginary adversary. It strikes me that our divergence, after all, is not so much in ideals as in experiences. The victim of an environment of sex segregation naturally can have no real idea of what he loses by it, or what is to be gained by its removal. One who has been taught to regard women as perishable goods cannot help being mortally afraid of letting them out of safe custody.

The strange part of it is the blindness of orthodoxy, even when it is nationalist, to the fact that women whose very souls are thus cribbed and cabined can hardly be expected to have any expansive view of nationhood to hand on, but are bound, rather, to perpetuate the unreasoning fears and antipathies, that germinate so profusely in the darkness of the zenana, by planting them in the impressionable minds of their children, as seeds of future communal dissensions and thorns in the way of all attempts at national unification.

The vicious circle that has thus been hampering our nation building enterprises can best be broken by co-education ; for, as we who know can assure those who don't, once the sexes have revelled in the enlivening air of their common humanity, nothing can coax them back into the closeness of their old walls of separation.

I am afraid the reading of my speech has detained you too long. I can only hope that my plain speaking has not shocked some of you too much.



THE MYSTERY OF THE MOTHER

How very intricate her workings are
Who is the travail-power of every womb,
She is all heaven opened to a star,
She is all earth unfolded to a bloom.
Her giant mystery is everywhere
Sealed in minutenesses which, when they pass,
Are swiftly gathered to her quiet care :
Bird-notes, blade-tremours, dew-glows on the grass,
Dim-dotted moths, young moonbeams in the black
Of wooded nights whose naked centuries
Of frailest incarnations in whose track
Glimmer her immemorial monarchies.
The Mother's nature is a circling wide
Immensity which sea and sky proclaim
But faintly, as they stretch on every side
In carnivals of water and of flame ;
But would you know her concentrated ? She
Is self-discovered in each cast-away,
Such as an ivory shell, a purple bee,—
Wondrous futilities that live a day.
And yet, I know, although she loves to dwell
Crystallised in small bodies, trivial shapes
And with but little guessing, I can tell
Her trances in the glow-worms and the grapes,
Though each small thing re-write her faery tale
In which no infant heart-throb ever dies,
I feel the smallest thing the darkest veil
Which hides her mystic Beauty from these eyes.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya



PROBLEMS OF BUDDHISM

PROF. DR. M. WINTERNITZ

I.

THE progress of science consists—alas!—only too often in the growing knowledge that what seemed to be established truths were errors. When in the first half of the 19th century Eugène Burnouf published his “*Introduction à l’histoire du Bouddhisme indien*” (1844) and later Carl Friedrich Koeppen his two volumes “*Die Religion des Buddha und ihre Entstehung*” (1857 and 1859), people were convinced that they could learn everything worth knowing about Buddhism from these books. But when in 1877 T. W. Rhys Davids published his much-read book on “Buddhism”, which afterwards went through ever so many editions, and when in 1881 Hermann Oldenberg’s brilliant book on “Buddha” appeared, which we all read with enthusiasm in our youth, it was seen that Buddhism was after all something different from what it was formerly believed to be. Now at last we were convinced to have a true and correct picture of the life and teaching of the great Master. In 1882 T. W. Rhys Davids founded the Pali Text Society, and through the indefatigable labours of its founder and his collaborators, foremost among them his wife, Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, a long series of Pāli texts, soon also of translations, was published, and from year to year our knowledge of what seemed to be the most authentic sources of early Buddhism, as preserved in the Pāli Canon and the non-canonical Pāli books of Ceylon, increased. For a long time it was thought that even in the light of all these new materials the picture of Buddhism as drawn by T. W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg, was correct in all essentials and needed only filling up in details.

Again, while this work on the Pāli texts was going on and is happily still continued to the present day by Mrs. Rhys Davids, especially in the splendid volumes of the Translation Series, there were other scholars—in France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Russia, England, Japan, and of late also in India—at work in making accessible to us ever new texts of different Buddhist sects and schools, in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, and Central Asian languages.

But with the growth of this vast Buddhist literature, not only our knowledge of Buddhism, that is, of Buddhism as it was at different periods and in different lands, has greatly increased and widened, but also new problems have arisen, and much that had seemed to be certain results of

scientific research, has to-day become an object of earnest doubt, of scepticism and a great deal of controversy.

And it is by no means on minor, secondary details that such doubts and controversies arise. On the contrary, the very fundamentals of our view of Buddhist teaching are shaken. The questions in dispute are such as: Can the period of the Buddha be fixed with any degree of certainty? Was there ever one founder of what we call Buddhism at all? Is the Pāli canon, which has been preserved in Ceylon, but which according to tradition itself has only been written down some centuries after the death of the Master, a reliable source of the original teaching? Will it ever be possible, by an ever so careful investigation of the vast material contained in the Pāli Canon (the only one that has come down to us in a complete form), the fragments of the Sanskrit Canon, the Chinese Tripiṭaka, the Tibetan Kanjur, the Mahāyāna texts of Nepal, Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan, to trace the original teaching of Gotama the Buddha? Was the message of the Buddha an entirely new one, or was it merely a variant of what had been taught in the Upaniṣads and Brahmanical scriptures long ago?

Coming to details, we find ourselves face to face with such great problems as those of the *soul*, of *Nirvāṇa*, and of *monasticism*. Was *anattatā*, the denial of a permanent spiritual self apart from the ever changing complex (*khandha*) of mental and bodily phenomena, the dogma found in so many parts of the Buddhist Scriptures, the teaching of the Buddha himself, or did he teach, like the sages of the Upaniṣads, an eternal divine Self? The latter view is now most emphatically advanced by Mrs. Rhys Davids.

And what is *Nirvāṇa*, the highest goal of the disciple of Buddha? Is it a positive, or a negative end? This question is as old as the earliest period of historical Buddhism, of which we have any written documents. And it has never ceased to be a disputed question. Years ago Adolf Bastian has said: "In my talks with the abbots of Burmese and Siamese monasteries, with Japanese monks and Mongolian Lamas, I have obtained as many different explanations of *Nirvāṇa*, as are found on the last questions in all religions, and as they can possibly be found from the idea of highest Mukti in pantheism down to a city of *Nirvāṇa* (Myang Nibpan) situated in the clouds."¹

A whole library may be filled with books and papers written on the meaning of *Nirvāṇa* by scholars in the East and in the West.

The most irritating, and at the same time the most comprehensive, problem, as in a way the solution of all other problems depends on it,

¹ Ad. Bastian, *Reisen in Birma in den Jahren 1861-1862*, Leipzig 1866, p. 406.

is that of monasticism. In our Buddhist texts, and in those of all sects, the career of the Buddha begins with the "Great Renunciation," with his going forth from the house to a houseless state ; he gives up his worldly life and becomes a wandering mendicant, teaching a new method of salvation, with an ascetic ideal ; he gathers a following of disciples, and soon becomes the founder of an Order of Mendicants who have vowed to lead the same ascetic life as the Master. And in Buddhist Scriptures, as we have them, the Buddha is generally described as surrounded by mendicant disciples, and what are generally called "dialogues of the Buddha" are as a rule dialogues held with one or more of these Bhikṣus or mendicants.

Besides the words handed down as words of the Master, the Scriptures also contain sayings of certain Bhikṣus or Bhikṣuṇīs (monks and nuns). Moreover, the whole Canon in its final redaction was according to tradition the result of rehearsals and revisions in councils or assemblages of monks.

Now the great question is : Are the ascetic ideal, the monkish world-contempt and negative outlook on life, renunciation and quietism, in fact all the characteristic features of a monastic creed which we find in our Buddhist Scriptures, part of the original teaching of the Founder, or are they distortions and misrepresentations due to the monks who, in handing down these Scriptures, have handled them in such a manner, that the original message of the Master has been quite obscured ? The latter is the view most vigorously advocated by Mrs. Rhys Davids in a great number of books and papers, published during the last years.² It is a strange and almost pathetic coincidence that she who has done so much to make Buddhist Scriptures known to us, is now most eager to shatter our belief in the authenticity of these Scriptures and to prove that only scanty fragments of the original teaching of the Buddha, buried under a huge mass of later monkish teaching, are contained in them and can only be discovered by careful "digging".

2.

It is only too true, as Mrs. Rhys Davids says,³ that "there is after all not a single original teaching in any religion which has remained unaltered"—"altered" being used in the sense of "changed and worsened". As Nietzsche has said that there has only existed one true Christian—Jesus, so one might say that there was only one true Buddhist in existence, namely Gotama the Buddha.

² See especially *Gotama the Man*, 1928 ; *Sakya or Buddhist Origins*, 1931 ; *A Manual of Buddhism*, 1932 ; *Buddhism, its Birth and Dispersal* (The Home University Library), Revised Edition 1934.

³ *Sakya*, p. 59.

Must we, then, despair of ever getting to know what the original teaching of the Master was?

Even Mrs. Rhys Davids who would go so far as to say "that could you now put into the hands of, say, Sāriputta any portion of Vinaya or Sutta, he would tell you it was hard for him to recognize in it anything that he taught as the right-hand man of Gotama," does not at all despair "of getting at something of original purport beneath these many palimpsests."⁴ The method, however, followed by her in her quest for the original teaching is, I am afraid, rather that of a theologian than that of a historian. She sets up a standard of what a new gospel of a world-religion *must* be, and what sort of man the Helper or messenger who pronounces the new message *must* be expected to be. And according to this criterion alone she means to distinguish the genuine Buddha word from the monkish superstructure, "to winnow, in the Pāli Piṭakas, the older grain from all the later chaff." The result of her "winnowing" is that Gotama the Man, as she sees him, has far more in common with men like Ramakrishna, Gandhi and Tagore, than with the Gotama of the Scriptures, and that the "Sakya" teaching—this is the term used by Mrs. Rhys Davids for the original teaching of Sakyamuni—discovered by her, has much more in common with Rabindranath Tagore's "Religion of Man", than with any of the Buddhist texts known to us. If there were such a gulf between this Sakya teaching and the Buddhism of the sacred books, as Mrs. Rhys Davids assumes, I doubt very much if any historical and philological criticism could ever help us to overbridge this gulf. Historical or philological criticism, however, can never be based on the assumption that a "World-gospel" must be so and so, and that a founder of a world-religion can only be a man of such qualities as we wish him to be. It depends, after all, on our own world-view what we expect from a new message or from the founder of a new religion. Historically, it seems to me, there is nothing so high and nothing so low, nothing so wise and nothing so foolish, nothing so noble and nothing so objectionable, that it could not have been preached by a religious leader at some time or other, at some place or other. There is as great a difference between the "helpers of men" from Moses, Zarathustra, Confucius, Laotse, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed down to Mahatma Gandhi, as there is between the different views of life in which suffering mankind has found consolation or on which it has based hopes for future bliss,—whether this future bliss is dreamt of as life in some mythological other world, or as becoming one either with an Universal Soul or with God (Brahman, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Allah), or as being merged in the Universe, or may be as, forgetting one's

⁴ Sakya, p. 3.

own self, a future happier state of human society of future generations, without war, without unemployment, without starvation and oppression.

I have shown elsewhere,⁵ that though I am fully aware of the difficulties of the old problems which we have known for long, and of the many new problems which it is the great merit of Mrs. Rhys Davids to have pointed out, I am by no means as sceptical as some scholars are, regarding the possibility of tracing the earlier stages in the development of Buddhism, and to a certain extent even the original teaching of Gotama himself.

The main sources for our knowledge of the personality of the Buddha and for his teaching must always remain the Buddhist texts themselves. From Buddhist monuments, going back to the time of Aśoka (3rd century B.C.) we learn something about the legend and the cult of the Buddha and about the spread of Buddhism, but hardly anything about the teaching of the Buddha. It is astonishingly little we learn about early Buddhism from Brahmanic or Jain sources, still less is the information to be got from Greek writers. Thus nothing remains but to try, by a careful examination of all the Buddhist sacred books, both in Pali and in Sanskrit or "mixed Sanskrit" (including those Sanskrit texts which are hitherto only known through Chinese or Tibetan translations), to distinguish between earlier and later texts or text fragments in these books, and between earlier and later phases of development in the traditions and doctrines handed down in the different sects and schools of Buddhism.

Of course, we too must start with an hypothesis. But our hypothesis is not some preconceived opinion as to what we have to expect a world-religion to be like. It is a far more modest hypothesis. There are certain traits, sayings, traditions and points of doctrine, in the Buddhist texts of all sects and schools and periods, which are *never quite missing*, though they are sometimes more dominating, and sometimes almost entirely pushed into the background and replaced by new views and doctrines. Is it too bold to assume that *these* traits belong to the original picture of Buddhism?

In the Mahāyāna Sūtras the Buddha is certainly more a divine than a human being. He is "a god above all gods" (*devātideva*). Nevertheless we find him there also in conversation with Ānanda, Śāriputra, and Kāśyapa, who are known as the disciples of Śākyamuni from the Hīnayāna books. And though he declares in the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka that he has existed for an inconceivable number of thousands of koṭis of aeons and never ceased to teach the law, that he has brought myriads of koṭis of beings to full ripeness in many koṭis of aeons, and will never cease to

⁵ Archiv Orientální I, 1929, 235 ff.; Studia Indo-Iranica, Festgabe für Wilhelm Geiger, 1931, 63 ff.; Orientalistische Literaturzeitung 1933, 665 ff.

preach the Law, yet even in this book no doubt is left about his being Śākyamuni, the Sage of the Śākya race, who was born on earth and entered Nirvāṇa, after having revealed the true law.

It is true that in many places of the Hīnayāna books, too, the Buddha is a superman, more than a god, possessing superhuman powers, whose preaching makes even the gods tremble,⁶ yet there are many more places in which the Buddha is nothing but a human teacher, who taught a new doctrine of salvation. It is certainly far more an improbable hypothesis that what we call Buddhism should have arisen without there ever having been such a man as Gotama of the Śākya race, than the hypothesis that at the basis of all the legendary and mythical elements that have accumulated around the person of the Buddha, there is the living personality of a great teacher and founder of a religion. It is a fact, that the Buddha stands before us as a far more living figure and distinct personality, than the poet Kālidāsa or the philosopher Śaṅkara, who lived ten and fifteen centuries after him.⁷

It cannot be decided, whether the Buddha himself already united his followers into a brotherhood of monks with fixed rules of discipline. But from our sources it is highly probable that such an order of mendicants with strict disciplinary rules was organized already at an early period in the history of Buddhism. It certainly existed at the time of King Aśoka. For in the rock inscription of Bairat the King addresses the Order and gives expression to his great veneration for the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.

Even Mrs. Rhys Davids is forced to admit that Gotama decided to lead the life of a wandering mendicant, but she tells us that he did so only because at that time people would not have esteemed a teacher who was a man of the world. He "only wore the monk's robe because he had to, not because he liked it."⁸ The "Great Renunciation," his going out from the house into houselessness, which for centuries has been a source of edification for pious Buddhists, and of inspiration to many a Buddhist poet and artist, is according to Mrs. Rhys Davids a gross misrepresentation of the books, for he was "a world-man, not an ex-world-man," he was "for work in world-work." It will be difficult to find any support for such a view in the Buddhist scriptures.

⁶ See, for instance, Aṅguttara Nikāya IV, 33.

⁷ More about the Buddha as a living person, also about his date, in my *History of Indian Literature*, II, p. 597 ff.

⁸ See Gotama the Man, pp. 22, 89 f., 112, 199.

3.

When we look over the whole of Brahmanical religious literature, we shall never find that on the rise of new ideas older traditions were falsified and replaced by these new ideas. On the contrary, care was always taken, to treat the old traditions, and even the old wordings, with the greatest respect, and to introduce any new ideas only by way of interpretation, putting new wine into old bottles. It is utterly improbable that the compilers of the Buddhist Canon should have done otherwise, that they should have directly falsified the word of the Master and replaced it by their own monkish doctrine. Can we believe that the "four noble truths" which according to our books are the very foundation of the Buddha's teaching, are nothing but "a late monastic gloss", "the monks' Diploma, the sanction of their life as monks?"⁹ The formula of the four truths and the noble eightfold path are not a dogma, but merely a terse statement of what the Buddha's teaching is meant to be, that its aim is to show the way to release from the Evil of the Samsāra, similarly as the physician, after the diagnosis, shows the cure of the disease and the remedies.¹⁰

These four noble truths and the eightfold path are never missing in any system of Buddhism. They are found in the Mahāyāna texts as well as in the Hīnayāna books, though in the system of Mahāyāna Buddhism they are of no importance, and nothing would be missing in the system, if they were not mentioned at all.

It may be fairly doubted if any philosophical doctrines in the strict sense of the word were part of the original teaching of Gotama, if not all that is called "Buddhist philosophy" is the result of a later development.¹¹ Yet philosophy was never quite separate from religion in India. The last aim of both philosophy and religion in India has always been to find a way to salvation. It is not likely that Gotama had nothing to say about the soul, life after death and other metaphysical questions which were generally discussed among teachers and thinkers at the time, but these were not the main points in his teaching. It seems that already

⁹ Sakya, pp. 56, 398; Gotama the Man, pp. 47 f., 163 f. The absence of the four truths and the eightfold path as items in the Four-Section and Eight-section of the Aṅguttara Nikāya (s. Mrs. Rhys Davids in Journal of the R. As. Soc. 1935, p. 721 ff.) is indeed striking. But a closer investigation of the Aṅguttara will be necessary to find out on what principle items have been included in this Nikāya (and in the Saṅgīti and Dasuttara of the Dīgha), before we can draw conclusions from this omission.

¹⁰ See Yogasūtra 2, 15; Nalinaksha Dutt, Mahāyāna Buddhism, p. 206 f.

¹¹ Thus Mrs. Rhys Davids, Sakya, p. 431 f.

at an early stage in the history of Buddhism there were differences of opinion on the soul and on the true meaning of Nirvāṇa, and we may have to leave it an open question at the present, what the Buddha himself thought and taught on these subjects.

There were, however, certain doctrines, whether we call them "philosophical" or "religious", which were in vogue at the time, and were simply taken for granted by Gotama, such as the doctrine of rebirth and Karman, and the belief in the efficacy of Yoga practice as a training in self-discipline and in the concentration of mind, leading up to mystic states of trance (*dhyāna*) and some higher knowledge. The belief in what is called *saṃsāra*, the painful round of rebirths and redeaths (*punarmṛtyu*), is at the bottom of that "pessimistic" view of life, which is characteristic of all ascetic sects, one of which is Buddhism. All these sects, whether they are Brahmanic or Jaina or Buddhist, look upon life in this world as worthless and transitory, a life in which all beings are harassed by ever returning old age, disease and death, when hurled about from existence to existence. But they share also the "optimistic" belief that there is an escape from this evil of *saṃsāra*, a deliverance from the round of births and death, and a possibility of reaching a state of bliss, whether it is called Brahman, or Mokṣa, or Nirvāṇa, or abode of Viṣṇu. All sects also agree in declaring, that this state of bliss is attained by a certain knowledge or state of mind, which can be gained through a saintly life of discipline, practically only by the perfect man, the saint and sage, whether he is called Yogin or Arhat or Kevalin, or Buddha, or Jina, but which may be also the distant goal of the common man to be reached, though only in the course of many rebirths, by a *gradual* approach to the saintly life which is the condition of the final bliss.

To deny that Buddhism, from its very beginning, was one of these ascetic sects, means to declare nearly the whole of Buddhist literature as one huge falsification. But this does not mean that the teaching of Buddha had not its own peculiar features, that it was not a new message.

And this also seems to me an indication of our being nearer to the original teaching of the Buddha: When we find ideas and sayings of such a kind as are never found in the sacred books of the Brahmins or of other ascetic sects, and thus give us the impression of a new message.

One of the new things which the Buddha taught, and which is emphasized in all the most authoritative Buddhist texts, is the so-called "middle way", his warning against excessive asceticism, his denouncing all useless and often repulsive ways of self-mortification as no less degrading than a life given up to sensual pleasures.

According to the legend told in the Vinaya Piṭaka, the Buddha after his enlightenment hesitated to preach the truth he had found to the people who would not understand it, and the god Brahman had to come down from heaven to persuade him to wander through the world, preaching his doctrine, and then only he took his great resolution: "*Wide opened is the door of the Immortal to all who have ears to hear.*" It would be difficult to find a similar sentence in any of the Brahmanic or other ascetic Scriptures. In the Upaniṣads the great truths are only communicated to the selected few, never "to all who have ears to hear." The legend seems to indicate that the Buddha's message was really meant for "Everyman," as Mrs. Rhys Davids would say. It is true, that in the dialogues and sermons the monks are generally addressed by the Buddha, but only because he preaches his doctrine *through* them. He speaks to the Bhikṣus, only in order that they may spread his teaching over the world.

The Buddha is said to have addressed to his very first disciples the words: "Go ye now, O Bhikkhus, and wander for the good of many men, for the weal of many men, out of compassion with the world, for the welfare, for the good, and for the weal of gods and men."¹²

Among the words of the Buddha, which have every claim to be considered as authentic, are those in the Mahāparinibbāna-Sutta where he says to Ānanda: "I have preached the doctrine, without making any distinction between within and without, the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher, who keeps some things back." Can it be clearer said that the Buddha-Dharma is no "upaniṣad", no esoteric teaching for the initiated only, but a doctrine for Everyman? In the Aṅguttara, again, it is said (3,129) that like the disk of the moon and the disk of the sun, the doctrine of the Tathāgata "shines for all to see, and is not hidden." Though the ideal of the mendicant's life is held high by him, the Buddha has also his message for the householder.

I do not mean to say that the Buddha taught a "dual gospel,"¹³ one for the monk and one for the layman. It was one gospel, but it taught a long way to a distant goal to be reached only by many stations, the first of which have to be passed by "Everyman," and only the last by the monk and the Arhat. There are certainly more sayings for lay folk to be found in the Canon than those which are generally pointed out in the known works on Buddhism.¹⁴ The teaching of the Mahāyāna also,

¹² Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga I, 11; Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 13, p. 112. See also Itivuttaka, par. 84.

¹³ See Mrs. Rhys Davids, A Manual of Buddhism, p. 300 ff.

¹⁴ Mrs. Rhys Davids, l.c., p. 306.

according to which the highest aim—rebirth as a Bodhisattva who will bring salvation to all beings—can be reached not only by the monk, but also by the householder and in fact by every human being, by practising pity and friendliness towards all beings, could hardly have been developed, if in its kernel it had not been rooted in the earliest Buddhist teaching.

4.

One thing is certain. From its very beginning Buddhism must have been what it has ever remained in all the numerous phases of its development: a religion of love and compassion. Even in the latest Buddhist Tantras, in which hardly anything has been left of genuine Buddhism, the preparations for the magic ritual include not only *yoga* exercises and meditations, but also practising of love (*maitrī*) and compassion (*karuṇā*).

During my stay at Darjeeling, in the summer of 1923, I had a long talk with Mr. Ladenla, a prominent leader of the local Buddhist community. When I ventured to say something about Tibetan Buddhism being only a corrupted form of the original Buddha teaching, he remonstrated most indignantly. The Buddhists, he said, are always helpful and honest to one another. They look upon all men, without distinction of race, religion, and caste, as their brothers. Every morning the Lamas in the monastery and every pious Buddhist says the prayer which he quoted fluently: "Homage to the Buddha, homage to the Religion, homage to the Order of Monks! (Three times repeated) Peace, great peace be granted to all creatures in the world who are to me like my mother! May all creatures in the world be free from sorrow and distress! May all creatures in the world be like the ocean (that is, one like the other)!" In accordance with these beautiful words, Mr. Ladenla assured me, Buddhists live even to-day. "No Buddhist," he said, "does anything for himself, everything for others. Even the turning of the prayer wheel and the flying of prayer flags are only for the welfare of our fellow beings. For the *Om padme hum* which is written on the prayer wheels and flags, by being transmitted through the air, serves for the weal of all beings that are touched by the breath of air."

The prominence given to the feeling of love and compassion in Buddhist ethics, cannot be separated from the prominence given to the idea of suffering in the "four noble truths". It is a psychological fact that the feeling of compassion, that is, the sympathy with the suffering of other beings, is strongest in those who suffer themselves. The greater one's own experience of suffering, the keener the feeling for the sufferings of one's own fellow creatures. This causal connexion between self-suffering and compassion is expressed in the Dhammapada verse (129):

"All men tremble at violence, all men fear death : remembering that you are like unto them, do not kill, nor cause others to kill." Compassion is the central idea of Mahāyāna ethics, and it is the ideal of the Mahayana Buddhist, completely to identify himself with the other, so as to think : "My neighbour suffers pain as I do myself, and there is no reason why I should care more about my own suffering than about his." As Śāntideva says at the beginning of his *Śikṣāsamuccaya* :

" If to my neighbour as to myself
Fear and pain are hateful,
In what does my self differ,
That I should guard it more than another's?"

And in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* the same poet says :

" I must destroy others' suffering,
for it hurts like my own pain,
I must do good to others,
as they are beings like myself."

Thus the negative and pessimistic outlook on life, far from being incompatible with ethics, is a fruitful soil for the growth of the ethical feelings of love and compassion. But it has been said by Dr. Albert Schweitzer¹⁵ that under the influence of the negative outlook on life no ethics of action could arise, that Buddha, unlike Jesus, did not demand active love from his followers. He commands avoiding pitiless action, but not pitiful helping. Every ethics of action is excluded by his doctrine of non-action, according to which all action, whether good or bad, leads to rebirth, and never to emancipation. Even "right action" in the "noble eightfold path" only means avoiding what is evil.

Almost with the same words as Dr. Schweitzer, the Licchavi general Sīha in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*¹⁶ approaches the Buddha saying: "I have heard, Lord, that the Samāṇa Gotama . . . teaches the doctrine of non-action, and in this doctrine he trains his disciples." And he politely asks the Master to explain to him whether this is so or not. And what is the answer of the Buddha? "There is a way, Sīha, in which one speaking truly could say of me: 'The Samāṇa Gotama denies action, he teaches the doctrine of non-action, and in this doctrine he trains his disciples.' And again, Sīha, there is a way in which one speaking truly could say of me: 'The Samāṇa Gotama maintains action, he teaches the doctrine of action, and in this doctrine he trains his disciples.' " And he explains further in what sense he teaches the doctrine of non-action: "I teach,

¹⁵ *Die Weltanschauung der indischen Denker*, München 1935, pp. 77, 86. (An English translation of this book is forthcoming.)

¹⁶ *Mahāvagga*, VI, 31; translation, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 17, p. 108 ff.

Siha, the not-doing of such actions as are unrighteous, either by deed, or by word, or by thought; I teach the bringing about of the manifold conditions (of heart) which are good and not evil," and the doctrine of action, in this sense: "I teach, Siha, the doing of such actions as are righteous, by deed, by word, and by thought; I teach the bringing about of the manifold conditions (of heart) which are good and not evil."

In the more popular sayings on the Karman and its consequences, and in the numerous popular legends illustrating the good consequences of the "white deeds" and the bad consequences of the "black deeds," there is no talk of non-action, but only of helpful, loving and compassionate action. And the Bodhisattva, the ideal perfect man of the Mahāyāna, has no other end in view but the welfare of others, as it is said in the Dharmasaṃgīti-Sūtra: "Whatever action the Bodhisattvas perform with their body, with their speech, with their thought, all that is done with regard to other beings, under the dominating influence of the Great Compassion, it is founded on, and occasioned by, the welfare of the beings, it is caused by the desire for the happiness and weal of all beings." And again in the Tathāgataguhyā-Sūtra: "He bends his head before all beings, and does not allow his pride to rise. . . . He gives the best, excellent food to those who suffer from hunger. He gives security to the beings who are in fear. He spares no trouble for the complete cure of the sick, and satisfies the poor with riches. . . . He brings glad tidings to the beings. He shares his possessions with the poor and distressed, and bears the burden of those who are tired and exhausted." ¹⁷

It is also well known, that such pious works as digging of wells and providing of rest-houses for travellers, etc., have always been practised by pious Buddhists. Already in the 3rd century B.C. King Aśoka whose edicts breathe the spirit of Buddhist ethics, tells us in his second rock-edict of Kalsi that everywhere in his dominions and even in the neighbouring countries as far as the kingdom of the Greek Antiyoga (Antiochos), he had hospitals established both for men and for cattle. "Wherever there were no herbs beneficial to men and beneficial to cattle, everywhere they were caused to be imported and to be planted. Likewise, wherever there were no roots and fruits everywhere they were caused to be imported and to be planted. On the roads trees were planted, and wells were caused to be dug for the use of cattle and men." ¹⁸

I cannot believe that all these expressions of *active* love and compassion are entirely in contradiction with the original teaching of Gotama himself.

¹⁷ Śikṣāsamuccaya pp. 117, 274.

¹⁸ Translation by E. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. 28 f.

It is true that in numerous passages of the sacred books the Buddhist monk is told to give up all action, both good and bad, to free himself not only from hatred but also from love, including even the love of wife and children, and thus from all bonds of worldliness, in order to reach the highest monkish ideal of perfect peace and indifference to the world. But what the monk is told to give up, is *kāmā* or *rāga*, that is "love" in the sense of "attachment", "worldly desire", "sensual love" or "passion", never *maitrī* (Pāli *mettā*), that is, "love" in the sense of "friendly feeling towards all beings".

There is love also among the monks. When the damsel Rohiṇī, who became a Therī (lady Elder) afterwards, was asked by her father why the recluses are dear to her, she replies :

"From many a clan and many a countryside
They join the Order, mutually bound
In love. Hence are recluses dear to me. "¹⁹.

More than that, *mettā*, *maitrī*, or "friendly feeling towards all beings", is an essential factor in the life of the monk. Even though he has retired from the world and given up all worldly activity, it is one of the most important spiritual exercises of the monk to awaken in himself the "Four Moods" (*bhāvanā*, also called *brahmavihārā* "Brahman states", or *appamaññā*, "the boundless ones"), that is, to sit in meditation suffusing all quarters of the world with a boundless mood of friendliness (*maitrī*), of compassion (*karuṇā*), of joyous sympathy (*muditā*), and of equanimity (*upekṣā*). And even with the Arhat who has reached the highest stage of perfection, and the Buddha himself, *maitrī* becomes a magic power, by which even the wildest beasts may be softened and subdued, as we are told in many a legend. In one of the canonical texts the Buddha himself is said to have taught a charm against snake-bite, which consists in suffusing first all kinds and tribes of snakes, and then all living creatures with the feeling of friendliness (*mettena cittena*).²⁰

The "Four Moods" exercise is also found in the Yoga-Sūtras and with the Jainas, though not before Umāsvāti who, according to Digambara tradition, lived about 135-219 A.D. It seems, for chronological reasons, more likely that both the author of the Yoga-Sūtras and Umāsvāti have borrowed it from the Buddhists, than that it is pre-Buddhist.²¹

Now it has been concluded from these passages that this *maitrī*, "friendly feeling" or "good-will", does not belong to the sphere of ethics

¹⁹ Therīgāthā 285, translation by Mrs. Rhys Davids, Psalms of the Sisters, p. 127.

²⁰ Aṅguttara Nikāya IV, 68. See also Mrs. Rhys Davids, Sakya, p. 221 ff.

²¹ See Yoga-Sūtra I, 33 and H. Jacobi, Ueber das ursprüngliche Yogasystem : Sitzungsber. Preuss. Akademie der Wiss., 1929, p. 607.

(*sīla*) at all, but only to that of meditation, that it is to be looked upon rather as a magic force than as a moral quality, and that, therefore, it is something entirely different from "Christian love".²²

H. Oldenberg was the first who emphasized the difference between that Charity or Love, of which the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians (I Cor. 13) so exultantly writes : "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal", of which he says that it never faileth, though prophecies may fail, tongues may cease, and knowledge may vanish away, and that it is greater than faith and hope. The judgment of Oldenberg that Buddhist *maitrī* lacks the warmth of the Christian love, that it springs not from an overflowing heart, but from cool reflection and passive contemplation, that the suffusing with the "four moods" is nothing but "one exercise among other exercises of soul gymnastics"²³ has often been repeated.

It should not, however, be forgotten that in our texts we find the *maitrī* not only in this spiritual exercise of the "four moods", but also by itself. R. Pischel²⁴ has first drawn attention to the beautiful praise of *mettā* (*maitrī*) in the Itivuttaka (Nr. 27) where it is said that all pious works, by which one may acquire merit, are not worth the sixteenth part of the emancipation of heart consisting in love (*mettā*), that it outshines all other pious works, just as the autumnal sun and the morning star transcend by their brightness all other lights. Here we read also : "Well it is with him who, with a guileless heart, shows friendly feeling even towards one living being only : but the noble one who shows pity with all living creatures, acquires abundant religious merit." It seems unfair, not to see the warmth and genuineness of the feeling of love also in the Mettasutta,²⁵ certainly one of the most popular, and probably also one of the earliest devotional texts, where it is said : "As a mother, even at the risk of her life, watches over her own child, her only son, thus let him cultivate a boundless feeling (of friendliness) towards all beings."

That this *mettā* does not belong only to the "soul gymnastics" of meditation and contemplation, is shown by those passages in which the friendly feeling is said to be expressed in *deeds*, words and thoughts towards one's fellow beings.²⁶

²² Friedrich Weinrich, *Die Liebe im Buddhismus und im Christentum*, Berlin 1935.

²³ H. Oldenberg, *Buddha*, 7th Ed., Berlin 1920, p. 335 ff; *Aus dem alten Indien*, Berlin 1910, p. 1 ff.

²⁴ *Leben und Lehre des Buddha*, 1905, p. 76 ff.

²⁵ Suttanipāta 143-152=Khuddakapāṭha 9.

²⁶ Aṅguttara Nikāya V, 105; VI, 11.

I agree with Mrs. Rhys Davids who is of opinion that the "Four Moods" exercise, though going back to an early period of Buddhism, is a later production, while the first mood, love or friendly feeling towards all beings (*maitrī*), "is a true attribute of Gotama".²⁷

As the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans (I, Rom. 13) says : "For he that loveth another has fulfilled the law", and adds that all the commandments are briefly comprehended in the old Hebrew saying of Leviticus (19, 18), "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself", thus a Buddhist might well say that all the four principal commandments, enjoined for laymen as well as monks—refraining from killing and hurting any living being, from stealing, adultery, and lying—are briefly comprehended in the one word *maitrī*. And what is the Mahāyāna ideal of considering oneself as perfectly like one's neighbour (*parātmasamatā*) and even of identifying oneself with him (*parātmaparivartana*) else, but the strongest expression of the "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"?

If Buddha did not demand from his followers that they should love their enemies, bless those that curse them, do good to those who hate them, and pray for those who persecute them (St. Matthew 5,44), yet early Buddhism, and I believe, Buddha himself taught them not to hate their enemies. Such verses as those found in the Dhammapada :

“Not by hatred does hatred ever come to rest,
By non-hatred only does it cease :
this is an everlasting rule.”

“By non-wrath let him conquer wrath,
By goodness the wicked shall be overcome,
The stingy shall be conquered by a gift,
Let him conquer by truth the teller of lies,”²⁸

may not be the very words of the Master, but it is highly probable that similar words came from his mouth.

One of the most beautiful legends in illustration of the rule of not hating one's enemy is the legend found already in the Vinaya Piṭaka, of prince Dīghāvu, whose father and mother have been killed by king Brahmadatta of Benares, who has long prepared to avenge the murder of his parents, but at the last moment when the king was given into his hand and he had already unsheathed his sword, he spared the king's life, remembering the words spoken by his father in the hour of his death :

³⁷ Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Sakya*, pp. 216 ff., 229.

²⁰ Dhammapada 5 and 223.

"Not by hatred, my dear Dīghāvu, is hatred appeased ; by not-hatred, my dear Dīghāvu, hatred is appeased."²⁹

One might, of course, find fault with this teaching of not-hating and not-injuring as being mainly negative, but it has been truly said by Mrs. Rhys Davids,³⁰ that even this negative rule, if generally introduced into our lives, would insure "a very Paradise on earth." How far removed are we to-day from this earthly Paradise !

But is there any meaning at all in speaking of "active" and "passive" love? Can love ever be anything but active? Is not any feeling that binds us to our fellow beings, any state of mind that implies a clear consciousness of a close community with all that lives, bound to be active ? Can love ever do anything but work for some good ?

There is no denying that there is a contradiction between the monkish or ascetic ideal of "sacred indifference" and perfect quietism on the one hand and acting in love and pity on the other hand : but happily religious teachers have never been mere logicians, but have always made free use of the privilege of inconsistency.

²⁹ Mahāvagga X, 2; Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 17, p. 291 ff.

³⁰ Sakya, p. 215.

SHALL WE LOOK BACKWARDS OR AHEAD?

PROF. DR. STEN KONOW

We do not know when a real theatre came into being in India. Terms such as *naṭa*, *nāṭaka*, etc., point to a development from popular beginnings. If the theatre had evolved independently within the higher classes, we should certainly expect good Sanskrit words.

We know that *naṭas* existed in Pāṇini's days, and there was even a *naṭaśāstra* by Śilālin (IV. iii. 110). Kātyāyana and Patañjali are silent about the *naṭaśāstra*, but they know Śilālin, for in the commentary on VI. iv. 144 they teach the formation of *Sailāla* from Śilālin, and in the Mahābhāṣya on IV. ii. 66 mention is made of *Sailālino naṭāḥ* 'Naṭas who study Śilālin.'

There are also indications to show what the word *naṭa* meant to Patañjali. No importance can be attached to passages such as *sarvakeṣi naṭaḥ* (II. i. 69) ; *naṭasya bhuktam, naṭo bhukto* (II. iii. 67) or to the lax morals of the Naṭas' wives (VI. i. 2). More important are the remarks *agāsīn naṭaḥ* 'the naṭa sang' (II. iv. 77) and *rasiko naṭaḥ* 'the naṭa understands the *rasas*' (V. ii. 95), because we learn that the naṭas were singing and thus expressing various *rasas*. And this is confirmed by the Mahābhāṣya on I. iv. 29 *ākhyātopayoge* 'when there is an application the teacher (is *apādāna*).' The question is raised why the word *upayoge* is used, the answer being that that is done in order to avoid the ablative denoting the *apādāna* in sentences such as *naṭasya śṛṇoti* 'he listens to the naṭa.' It is objected that this is not correct because there is also an *upayoga* in such cases, 'and for this reason I say *upayoga*, because the *ārambhakas* (i.e. *śrotṛṇām madhye mukhyāḥ* according to Kaiyaṭa, *gītayātnena pravṛttimantaḥ* according to Nāgojī) go to the stage (*raṅga*) in order to listen to the naṭa.'

It is of course not possible to be confident, but we are left with the impression that Patañjali did not know a theatre and actors in the higher sense, and that his *naṭas* were rather mimes and singers. And there is absolutely nothing known which invalidates that impression.

On the other hand, we know that a fully developed drama existed in Aśvaghōṣa's time, i.e. probably about the beginning of the second century A.D. We should then have to assume that it gradually developed between the middle of the second century B.C., which I believe was the time of Patañjali, and the second century A.D. And it is tempting to

assume that the contact with foreign peoples which was so prominent just in that period has played a certain rôle when the popular art of the nāṭa was lifted up into a higher sphere. It is even possible, though I do not think it is necessary or even probable, that foreign models have been at play. The originality of a people does not only consist in the ability to create everything independently, but just as much in the faculty to enable and spiritualise what they may develop under the stimulus of foreign impulses.

In making these remarks I have not in any way meant to minimize the creations of India. Even if there should finally prove to have been some foreign influence at play, the Indian drama is entirely Indian and appeals to us just because it is Indian. I have only wanted to point to what I am convinced is a fact, that the Indian genius has created something new in comparatively late times. And I have done so because I have the feeling that there is a tendency in certain circles in India today to trace every cultural achievement back to the most remote past. I have read papers and books where the authors have tried to prove that civilization had reached its zenith in India at a time when all other nations were barbarians, though some people maintain that India is the original home of the human race on the whole, even of the foreign barbarians. The discovery of the ancient Indus Civilization has here played a great rôle. Many people in India are convinced that it represents the oldest known stage of the Aryan people, much older and far above anything that other nations have produced in such ancient times.

It is not my intention to discuss such questions. I am convinced that the Indus civilization preceded the coming of the Aryans into India, and I think it possible that its disappearance was due to the Aryan invasion. And I agree with those scholars who think that very much of what we are accustomed to consider as Aryan and, still more, as Hindu, can be traced back to the pre-Aryan population of the Indus valley.

But just because such is my view, my admiration of the achievements of the Aryans in India has increased. The excavations at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa make us acquainted with a high development of everything connected with comfort and easy life. But nothing has been found which leads us to think of that high spiritual culture which fascinates every student of Indian literature and art. And I am convinced that the high flight the Indian spirit took in later times is partly the result of the mixture of different racial elements.

If the old Indus civilization had remained undisturbed during the ages, there is every likelihood that it would have stagnated and lost its vitality. That was perhaps already the case when the Aryans entered

on the stage. And the danger of stagnation is always there where the current of life flows quietly without any disturbance.

Some people will think that the period of the Brāhmaṇas shows traces of such a stagnation, while the Upanishads, Buddhism and Jainism bear witness to high spiritual faculties, perhaps as the last and highest stage of a long peaceful development. And it is possible to maintain that the fresh current which fertilized Indian civilization in the first centuries of the Christian era was to some extent due to the influx of new, foreign nations.

But India conquered her new conquerors, and gradually we seem to observe how the initiative is lost, and the high faculties of the Indian mind deflected towards the past, intent on preserving and perfecting the achievements of the forefathers and less on opening new ways.

Then came the Muhammedan invasion. And again we see India waking up, and new and glorious spiritual conquests are made, this time through the medium of the vernaculars.

The Muhammedans fared like their predecessors. They were more or less Indianized. And, at the same time, the Indian spirit gradually seems to have lost much of its vitality.

Again there was a new conquest, and new awakening. And this time it is still going on.

But then I ask myself: can we learn something from the past about how we should try to meet the future? And I think we can.

Every time when India has been conquered in the past, she has been stimulated to new activity and has returned to her past with a widened outlook and wider aims. It is only in being faithful to our inheritance that we can hope to make life harmonious and happy.

But it is fatal to rest in the consciousness of having inherited something precious, something grand. The inheritance must be increased or, to use a commercial term, be invested in new undertakings. We must not only look back and accept in thankfulness and with pride what our ancestors handed down to us. We must also look ahead, to new starts, new achievements.

In India, as in other ancient countries, mythology places the golden age in the beginning of the development. The consequence is a mental attitude which leads us to think that our time and the future can never reach the level of the past. But does not that mean that we are unworthy of those whose inheritance we have taken over? Just the belief, the conviction, that what they did was the right thing should make us try to be worthy heirs and to do still greater things, which they have enabled us to contemplate and to undertake. To try to surpass them is to honour them,

And is it impossible to surpass them? Is Jagadish Bose inferior to the thinkers of the Upanishads, and was Kalidasa so much greater than Rabindranath Tagore?

We may ask and ask, and our answer will probably depend on our varying attitude of mind. It is perhaps because I am a European that I have no doubt in my mind. We must honour our forefathers and be thankful for what they gave us, but we must not rest content with our inheritance. We must try to reach still higher aims.

And there is still one thing I think we can learn from India's history. We must not try to shut ourselves off from impulses from other peoples and civilizations. The more manifold and varied the conflux of nations and ideas is, the richer the life will be. Just in these later times we see barriers being built between country and country, and continent preparing to fight continent, as if the aim were a huge armageddon. The leaders of the nations of the world seem to have given up thinking of the past and seem not to care for the future. The present day takes all their interest.

That is, I am convinced, an attitude of mind which is hardly worthy of the civilized man. Taking our footing in the past we must look forward to a future much better than what was formerly. And such a future is only possible if all the nations of the world tune their instruments to a real concert.

MOSLEM CALLIGRAPHY

M. Ziauddin

II

The Position of a Calligraphist

BEFORE we proceed to discuss the other styles of Calligraphy, it seems to me desirable that a few words should be said on the position of a calligraphist and his art in the Moslem Society.

In the days of the Abbasides, with the introduction of paper,¹ and the spread of culture among the masses, the institution of education and the art of book production gained supreme importance. What was then called *warāqat*, consisted of the profession of transcribing manuscripts, of book-binding, gilding and the business of selling books.² *Warāqat* flourished as an honourable pursuit for literary men and scholars of every description. The great demand for quick work in the copying of books had produced a class of prolific scribes who combined the merit of speed with that of a beautiful hand-writing and were specially called *warrāq*. The learned as well as the officers of the government employed them as secretaries and amanuenses.

In those days the publication of a book was an event of great social importance. It meant business to the calligraphist as a class, reputation to the author with a hope of immortality and enrichment of knowledge to students. An author either delivered his work as a lecture from the pulpit of a mosque, or read out from his notes with commentary in extempore, while scribes and students dispersed among the audience noted down his words with incredible speed. Dictation (*imlā*) ran for days, months, even years, according to the extent of the thesis.³ Scribes then compared their texts with each other, and corrected their copies according to the one certified by the author as correct and reliable. These texts were then copied again and sold in the book-market. Authors wrote scores of volumes and it is difficult to believe today how they managed to write single handed such encyclopaedic works as they have produced.⁴

1. Fihrist, p. 32.

2. Ibid, p. 169 ; Ibn Khaldun, Cairo, I, pp. 349, 350, 351.

3. Ibn Khallikan, II, p. 228 ; Fihrist, p. 299.

4. Ibid., I, p. 297 ; Nafkhut-Tib, II, p. 884.

Authors had no rights of royalty over their works. Once broadcasted among students and scribes and through them to the world, the author lost every connection with his work. Any body could copy and sell it as his own property. There was a time when misappropriation of authorship was common. Authors, in order to save their authorship, took the precaution of mentioning their name in full in the text, as many times as they could manage. Poorer authors wrote their works, copied them and sold them at the door of their house or by auction in the streets of the town.¹



Fig. 76.

A panel of Nasta'liq calligraphy by Pir Muhammad (Kala-Bhavan Museum, Santiniketan).

Book-shops generally clustered round the principal mosque of the locality and formed the book-market. Baghdad had about three hundred bookshops. Bookshops were the principal resort of the learned. Book-sellers being generally scholars and authors of repute were the centres of attraction for all seekers of knowledge. Here in the midst of polished and gilded manuscripts squatted the respectable and

the learned and discussed poetry and religion till midnight.

Speed in the transcription of a text was a matter of keen contest between scribes. The calligraphist of the court of the prince Bayasanghar is reported to have written three thousand lines of poetry in one day and night. During the time he was performing the feat, hundreds of people had gathered round the palace at Mashed, and drums were being beaten in full fury to stir up the excitement that the occasion had created.² Yahya bin Adi was such a fast hand that he could write one hundred pages in twenty-four hours.³

1. Ibn Khallikan, I, p. 63.

2. Tazkira-i-Khushnawisan, p. 47.

3. Tarikhul-Hukama, p. 369.



Fig. 77.

Portrait of a Moroccan calligraphist, by E. Dinot

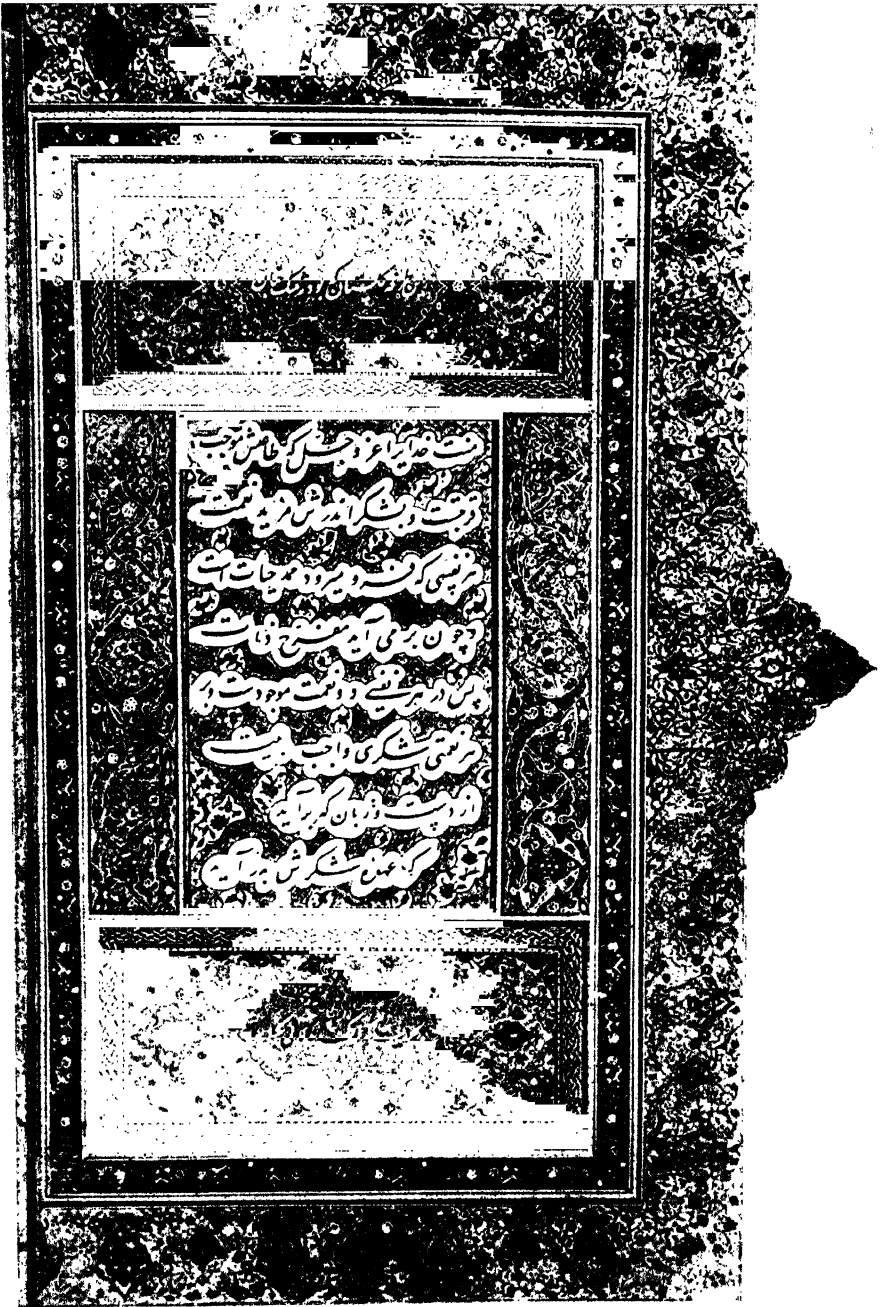


Fig. 78.

Front page of the *Culistan* of Sa'di, calligraphed by Mir 'Ali for Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz Bahadur of Bukhara, in 950/1543 (*Monuments et Memoires*, 1912—1919, p. 189, Pl. XV ; the fringes have been, unfortunately, omitted by the block-maker).

The profession of a copyist being fairly profitable, literary men and scholars adopted it. Normally, their daily income through copying saleable books was three to four rupees.¹ They were also employed in libraries for transcribing books and were paid regular remuneration. They were appointed as teachers, the most reputed among them being selected for instructing princes, princesses and sons of nobles. Often a prince had more than one teacher in calligraphy, each being in charge of the particular kind of hand he specialized in. Calligraphists were given charge of libraries where their duty was to supervise the work of subordinate scribes engaged in copying books and look to the quality of their handwriting. Remuneration of a scribe depended on the quality of his hand, the average of his mistakes and his speed. Mullah Muhammad Amin of Kashan, the superintendent of the library of 'Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan (who was a remarkable penman himself), was paid a monthly salary of four thousand rupees.² But the Khan Khanan's liberality was proverbial ; most of his artists enjoyed *jagirs* too. In the library of Banu 'Ammar, at Tripoli, one hundred and eighty scribes worked, of whom a group of thirty could always be seen at work day and night.³ In the royal library of Bayasanghar, who was a calligraphist himself, forty scribes worked under the supervision of Maulana Ja'far.⁴

Scribes were very often scholars of recognised status and while they served as copyists they could do their own creative work too. For example, Ibn Sa'd was a copyist of Waqidi and has written a stupendous biography of the Prophet.⁵

Every nation, at the height of its culture, has given proofs of its love for knowledge by founding public schools and libraries, but with Moslems the desire had amounted almost to madness. Nothing satisfied their vanity so much as the number of books in their libraries. Books were often written at the request of Kalifs and nobles who paid huge amounts of money for their labour. Mansur the Andalusian had received five thousand coins of gold for his *Fusus*.⁶ Part of a Kalif's palace was always a library. Princes, courtiers, nobles and the rich gloried with the scholars in possessing

1. Yaqut, III, pp. 85 ; refer also to p. 105.

2. Islamic Culture, Oct., 1931, p. 627.

3. Transactions of the 7th A. I. O. Conference, 1933, p. 1032.

4. Tazkira-i-Khushnawisan, p. 45.

5. Fihrist, p. 145.

6. Nafkhat-Tib, II, p. 728.

rare manuscripts in their libraries. The palace of a Kalif was a library as well as the debate house of the empire where men of talent of all religions and nationalities were brought together to solve religious and intellectual problems, with the king as their president.

Adjoining the halls of the library were studios where hundreds of calligraphists copied books, while painters illustrated them with mini-

atures, binders bound them in leather and gilders and illuminators finished them as pieces of artistic production. Scribes were often grouped into separate rooms according to subjects of their transcription. The calligraphists of the Koran were grouped together and so were the copyists of books on tradition, biography, history, law and medicine, etc. Some of them were appointed to go through the copied manuscripts and add short vowels and diacritical marks.¹

Never was there so great a demand for beautifully written manuscripts as in those days of the Abbasides. The standard and the style

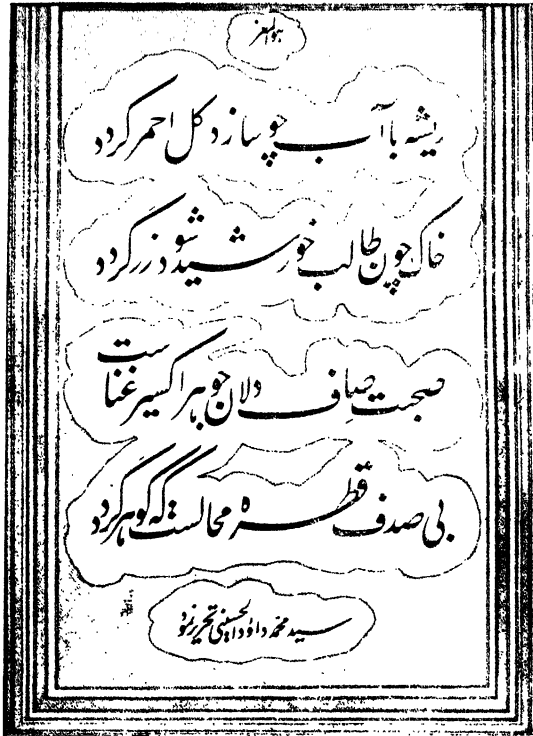


Fig. 79.

A beautiful and delicate specimen of Nasta'liq calligraphy by Sayyad Muhammad Da'ud al-Husaini of Kabul.

set up by the Kalifs was followed by their subjects. And most of the profit accruing on the pious work of educating the masses and of collecting libraries for public or private use, went to the class of the calligraphists.

The amount of work the scribes had on hand in the Capital towns of the empire is not possible to guess. Yet an idea may

1. Ibn Khallikan II, p. 334; T. Atibba, II, p. 234-236; Almagrizi Khitat, I., pp. 409, 458; Yaqut, V, p. 447; Ibn Khaldun, IV, p. 146; Ibn Khallikan, I, p. 144.

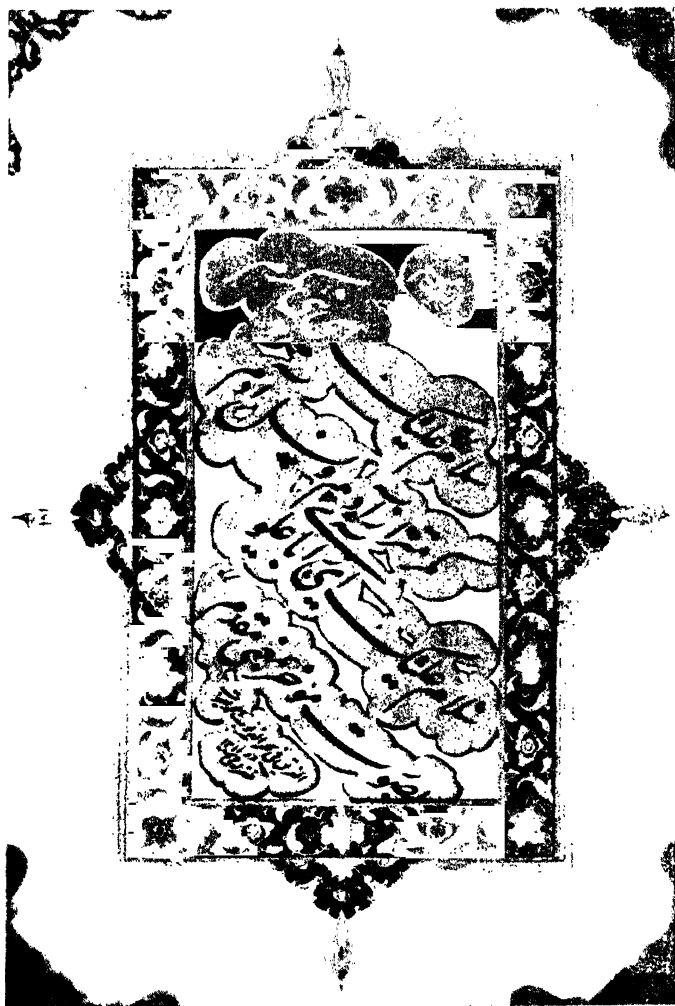


Fig. 89.

A panel of modern Nasta'liq calligraphy, by Muhammad
Ya'qub of Kabul.



Fig. 81.

A panel of modern calligraphy, by Sayyad 'Ata
Muhammad of Kabul.

be formed of the briskness of their business by looking over the number of books that some of the libraries are recorded to have contained. Harunar-Rashid's library at Baghdad, called *Baitul-Hikmat*, that is, "The Abode of Wisdom," contained ten hundred thousand books. To this library was also attached a department for translation in which scholars translated books from the Indian and Greek languages into Arabic. These translations were weighed in gold and the amount paid to the translators as wages.¹ It had separate rooms for calligraphists. This library was plundered by the Moghals. The library of Shapur bin Ardashir, the minister of Bahaud-Daulah, contained ten thousand manuscripts. This one was burnt to ashes by Tughril Baig in 447 A. H.² In Egypt 'Aziz Billah had collected sixteen hundred thousand works (365 A. H.). These were destroyed by Kurds.³ The Fatimid library at Tripoli, founded by Banu 'Ammar, was the biggest that Moslems ever collected. It contained thirty hundred thousand books. It was destroyed by Christian crusaders in 502 A. H. ⁴ Granada had seventeen big and hundred and twenty small schools which had libraries attached to them, comprising four hundred thousand books. Eighty libraries were open for public use day and night. The royal library at Cordova occupied a whole palace.

Those who could afford sent agents to different countries for buying and copying books. Faizi had his agents in Persia. Hunain bin Ishaq had his agents in Roman countries who bought or copied for him books on Greek sciences and arts.⁵ The monthly salaries he paid to his translators alone amounted to £250.⁶ Muhammad bin 'Abdul Malik paid £1000 monthly to his translators. Hakam II, the Spanish king, was a great lover of books. "Never had so learned a prince reigned in Spain," writes Prof. R. Dozy, "and although all his predecessors had been men of culture, who loved to enrich their libraries, none of them had sought so eagerly for rare and precious books. At Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus and Alexandria, Hakam had agents who copied or bought for him—grudging no cost—ancient and modern manuscripts. With these treasures his place overflowed ; on all sides,

1. Fihrist, p. 243 ; Abul-Faraj, p. 146.

2. Ibn Asir, II, p. 145 ; Yaqut, I, p. 799.

3. Ibn Khaldun, IV, p. 81.

4. Gibbon's Roman Empire, VII, p. 505.

5. There was a regular profession of book agents or brokers of book, who were called *Dallalul Kutub*, Ibn Khallikan, I, p. 63.

6. Tabaqat ul-Atibba, I, p. 187 ; Fihrist, p. 243.

too, were to be seen copyists, binders, and illuminators." ¹ And this description would also hold true for most of the houses of the literati and the rich of those days.

The standard of literacy at Baghdad was higher than that at Granada, Cordova or Nishapur. The annual expenditure of the Nizamiyyah school at Baghdad, where education was imparted free, was six hundred thousand *dinars* (£ 300,000).² Here education was also common among women. Among the slave girls of Zubaida, the wife of Harunar-Rashid, there were one hundred that had had proper education. ³ According to Dr. Sprenger's estimate, the number of such outstanding personalities among scholars whose lives have been recorded in biographical works (the *Rijāl*) is about five hundred thousand.⁴ The number of ordinary literate men and women must be, therefore, about a thousand times greater. While most of the literate people strove to acquire a good handwriting, an equipment very commonly desired by Moslems, how keen must have been the competition among calligraphists and how high the standard of excellence in penmanship ?

Professional artists of various branches of arts and crafts had to learn calligraphy which formed part of their decorative schemes. The gold-smith, the jeweller, the copper-and iron-smiths, the seal engraver, the wood and stone engravers and the potters were often experts in several styles of calligraphy, and they wrought their wares with inscriptions that gladdened the heart of a calligraphist.

Among innumerable scribes, the calligraphist was one who specially devoted himself to developing penmanship as an art in itself. And they were always the selected few. They copied works not so much for reproducing a text as for writing it beautifully. They displayed their art on panels of paper, called *vasli*, which fetched them handsome price. These panels were papers, mounted on card-boards, containing a poem, generally a quatrain, in bold hand, very often illuminated ; these were bought by lovers of art as works of art and students of calligraphy kept them as models for exercise.

The work of a calligraphist was always costly and greatly prized by admirers. Five hundred pounds for a book of four hundred pages was not a rare price. These artists pursued their profession with a

1. Spanish Islam, R. Dozy, p. 454 ; see Al-Maqrizi, I, p. 408.

2. Sirajul-Muluk, p. 267.

3. Abul-Mahasin, I, p. 632

4. Mazamin-i-Shibli, p. 35.

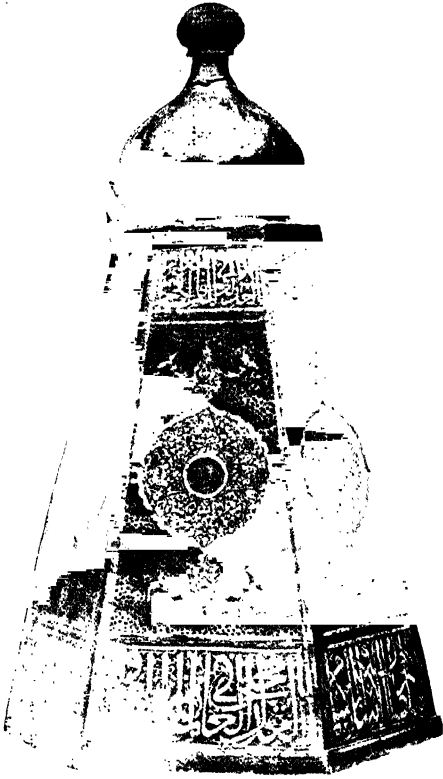


Fig. 82.

Bronze chandelier inlaid with silver, with the name of Qait Bay ; inscriptions are in decorative Nusk, XV century (Victoria and Albert Museum).

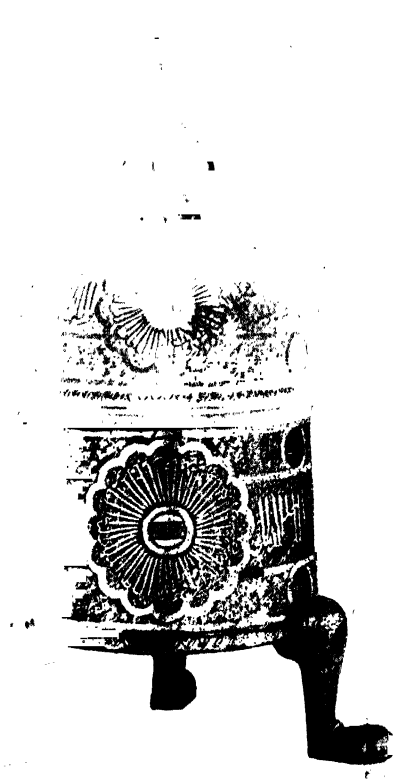


Fig. 83.

Bronze incense-burner inlaid with silver, bearing the name of Muhammad Ibn Qalaun ; the inscriptions are in decorative Suls style ; XIV century (Victoria & Albert Museum).

devotion almost ascetic and imposed on themselves strict discipline. We often read that such and such a calligraphist never omitted his daily exercise of writing a few pages till the very day he expired. They were in fact revered in their society as saints and were often men of strong moral purity and religious character.

Ghulam Muhammad, Haft Qalami (i. e. 'the master of seven styles') was particularly keen on visiting calligraphists personally. His meeting with another calligraphist and the love with which they talked about their profession should be of interest here. The Haft Qalami, on hearing the fame of Hafiz Nurullah, went to see him. Even on his first visit he found him extremely well-mannered, unassuming, just and absolutely devoid of pride. "The Hafiz," writes the Haft Qalami, "showed me his papers of exercise. He had, by then, transcribed the *Haft-band-i-Kashi*, at the request of Asafud Daula Bahadur. How

would I put in words the miracle the Hafiz had performed with his pen ? It was verily a garden in full blossom ! No body would ever be satisfied by looking at it. A long time passed in looking and enjoying these papers . . . without any exaggeration I may say that this noble heart, notwithstanding the greatness he has attained in his art, has no pride whatsoever. . . .”

They then talked of Shahjahanabad, and the Hafiz asked : “I have heard, Sir, that you have brought with yourself the calligraphy of Aqa ‘Abdur Rashid. Would you be indeed so kind as to allow me to illuminate my eyes by having a look at them ?” Next time the Haft Qalami took the specimens of the Aqa’s writing with him. “The

Hafiz was extremely delighted by seeing both the bold and the fine varieties of the Aqa’s penmanship. From morning till after the noon he looked at them. . . .”

Their art absorbed all their attention and they were generally respected by all, alike by kings and the people. And calligraphists, too, were well aware of their importance, and were not always so very humble and unassuming as the Haft Qalami found the Hafiz to be. A few examples illustrative of the honour they enjoyed would not be out of place here.

Mir Khalilullha Shah was greatly honoured in his days. He copied the *‘Nan-Ras* with great care and made a present of it to Ibrahim ‘Adil Shah, the king of the Deccan. The King was extremely pleased with the gift and the accomplish-

ment of the artist. He bestowed on him the title of “The king of the pen”, and as a mark of extraordinary honour made him sit on his throne. After this ceremony was over, he bade his courtiers to accompany him to his residence.²



Fig. 84.

A specimen showing how an artist practises strokes and curves, by ‘Abdur Rahman of Herat.

1. Tazkira-i-Khushnawisan, pp. 45, 46.

2. Ibid, pp. 79, 80.

The Haft Qalami writes that an admirer of Khalilullah Shah's calligraphy wanted to buy some of his papers for seven hundred rupees, but the owner would not sell. After much haggling the bargain was struck for an Arabian horse. The customer procured one and bought the papers.¹

Yaqut Musta'sami (1203 A. D.) has been considered the greatest of Naskh writers. His reputation was so great that even in his lifetime books copied by him had spread all over the Moslem world. Each of his copies of the dictionary *al-jauhari* was sold at hundred *dinars* (£ 50).² He once copied the *Shuja* of Avenenna and sent the same to Muhammad Tughlaq (1324 A.D.) in India. The King appreciated the work greatly and sent to the calligraphist a gift of two hundred million *misqals* of gold in return. But the artist refused the gift considering it beneath his dignity to accept such a meagre sum.³

Mir 'Imadal-Husaini of Qazwin, the unapproachable master of the Nasta'liq style was almost a martyr to the pride he had in his talent. He cared little for the money and honour that was lavished on him so abundantly. Shah 'Abbas Safawi (1587/1629 A.D.) asked him to copy the *Shah-Namah* of Firdausi, that stupendous epic, and along with the request he sent him the meagre sum of seventy *tumans*. After the lapse of a year, the king sent for the book. Mir 'Imad handed the messenger seventy lines from the beginning of the book, and told the messenger that for the gift of the Shah this was all he could offer. This remark offended the king, who sent back those seventy lines to the calligraphist, and demanded his gold back. The Mir was



Fig. 85.

A panel of Mir 'Imad's Nasta'liq calligraphy

up to the occasion again. He took a pair of scissors and neatly cut those lines into seventy pieces. Each piece he gave to a disciple of his, who went home and brought back a *tuman* with him. Mir 'Imad then counted up seventy *tumans* in the palm of the messenger. He

1. Ibid, p. 81.

2. Ibn Khallikan, p. 207.

3. Les Calligraphes et les Miniaturistes, Huart, p. 85.

was murdered shortly after this event, in 1615 A. D. ; the crime is said to have been committed at the instigation of the king himself.¹

Mir 'Imad's calligraphy was very much admired by Shah Jahan. He gave the title of *Yak-sa'li* (centurion) to every one who presented him a specimen of his writing.²

Among the last of the great penmen the work of Aqa 'Abdur-Rashid was most dearly valued by the lovers of the art. He was a cousin and a student of Mir 'Imad. He came to India in Shah Jahan's time and was appointed a teacher to the prince Dara Shikoh, whom he instructed in the Nasta'liq style. Most of his life he passed at Akbarabad and was also buried there after his death. His calligraphy came to be so highly valued and so rare that those who possessed specimens were afraid of exhibiting them, lest they lose them.

The name of a renowned calligraphist meant money to forgers and they have exploited some great names, in particular the students of renowned artists. For example, a pupil of Aqa 'Abdur-Rashid, named Amir Razwi, imitated his style and signed his own writings by the Aqa's name. The *Haft Qalami* remarks, it required a very careful examination to decide which was which. The death anniversary of Aqa 'Abdur-Rashid was regularly observed in the month of Muharram, at Akbarabad. Calligraphists of all the important towns in the neighbourhood, specially those of Delhi, attended it, and benefited by exchanging their views on their art and other professional matters. A more lively gathering, however, was held on the fourth of every month at the house of Shah Waris 'Ali. He was a good calligraphist and specialized in the decorative style called *Gulzar* and also in the *Shikasta* hand. He was a lively soul and by no means over religious. In the monthly meetings that were held at his place, he entertained his visitors with music and dance by dancing girls. The *Haft Qalami* says that this meeting was always a great success. Shah Waris 'Ali died in 1227 A. H.³

Maulana Khawja Muhammad too had the same habit of signing his writings by the name of his master, the celebrated artist Mullah Mir 'Ali. Few People could detect the difference. His master was aware of the havoc his student had done and was still doing. He has complained of this misfortune of his in a poem, wherein he says :

1. Tazkirah-i-Khushnawisan, pp. 9, 93.

2. Ibid, p. 93.

3. Ibid, p. 131.

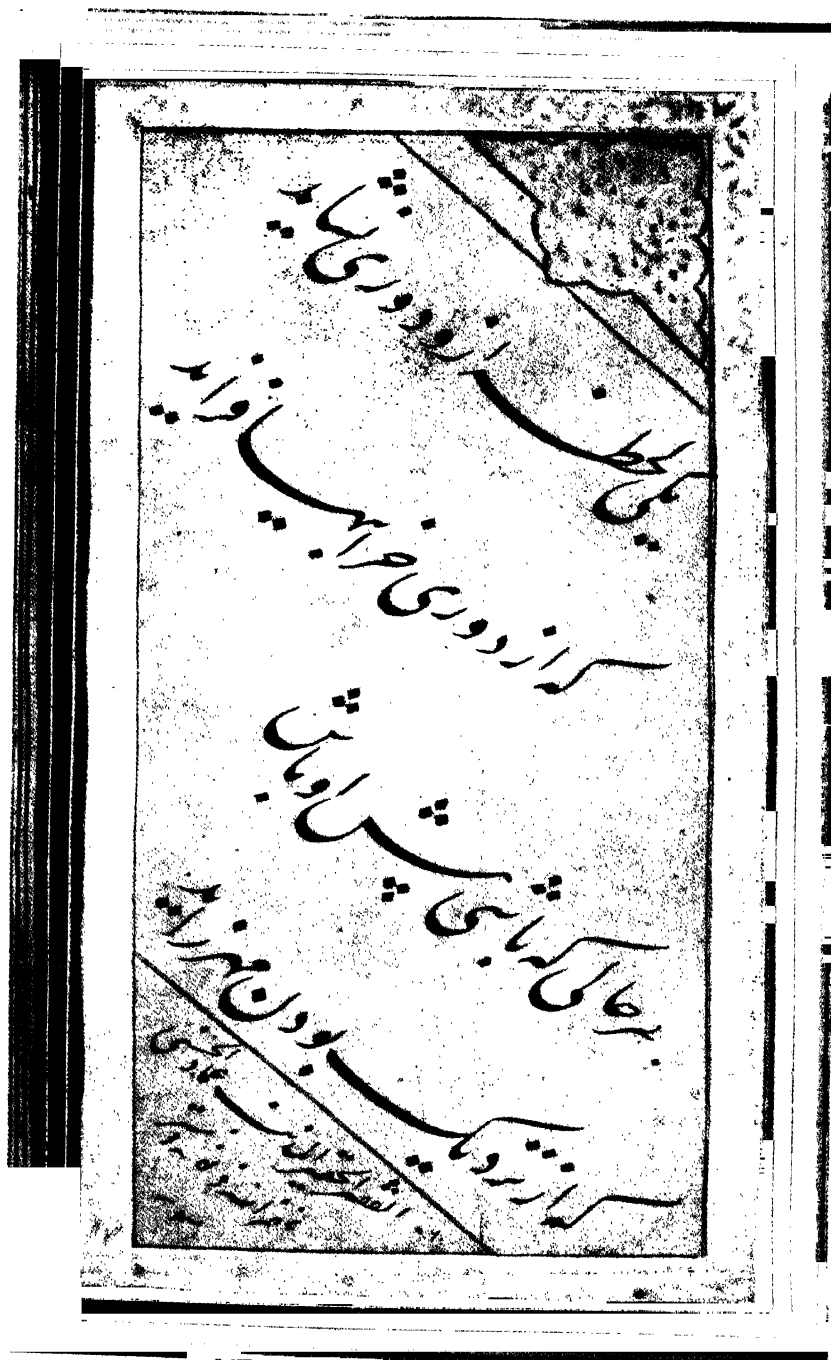


Fig. 86.

A panel of the calligraphy of the celebrated 'Imad al Husaini of Qazwin
(reproduced with gratitude from the Moslem Review of April 1936).



Fig. 87.

An extraordinarily beautiful specimen of Aqa 'Abdur-Rashid's calligraphy
(reproduced with gratitude from the Moslem Review).

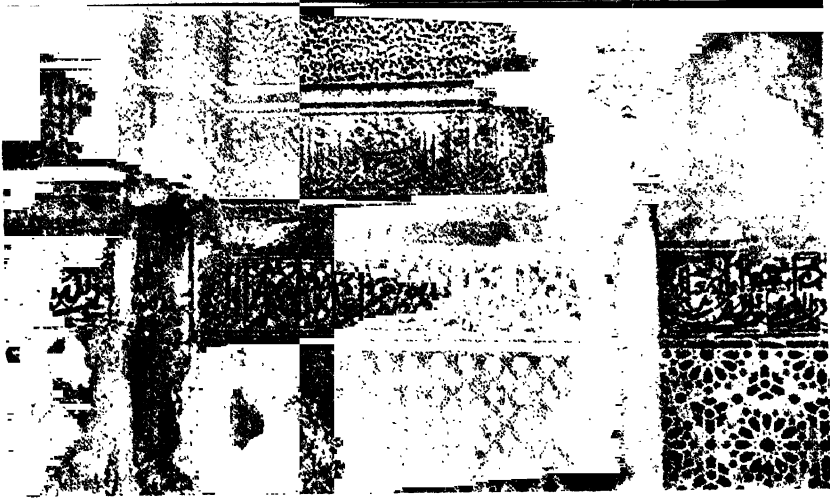


Fig. 88.

A band of inscription in the decorative Suls of the western variety, in mosaic faience, Madrasatul-Attarin, Fez

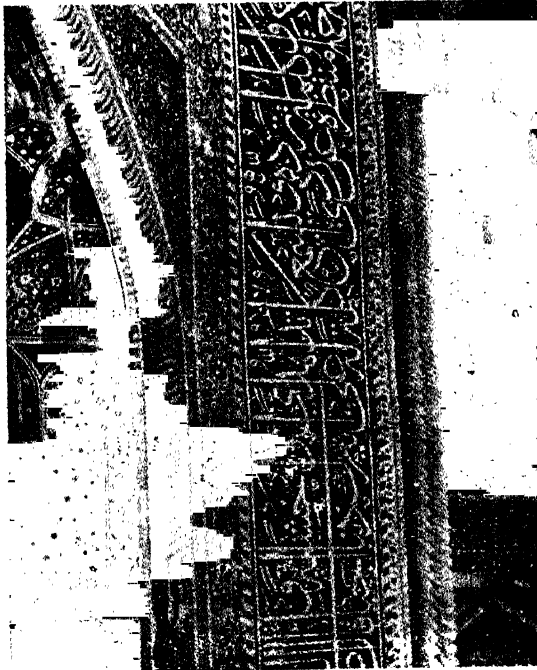


Fig. 89.

Architrave of the Masjid-i-Shah, Isfahan ; the inscription in the decorative Naskh style, done in mosaic faience.

"Khawjah Mahamud was my disciple for sometime, and I tried my best to instruct him, till his handwriting developed a feature. I have done him no wrong, nor does he do me any, save that he writes good or bad as best he can and signs the lot in my name."¹

Jahangir was an admirer of Mullah Mir 'Ali's hand ; the Mir himself was conscious of his talents and he has made no secret of it. In his poems he has often referred to the superiority of his art. A poem of his, of which I give a translation here, is remarkable in the sense that it describes that subtle point in the art of calligraphy where it touches pure art :



Fig. 90.

Mausoleum of Princess Tughai (d. 1348), the drum of its dome, with the inscription in Suls style of the Western variety, in mosaic faience, Cairo.

"My pen works miracles, and rightly enough is the *form* of my words proud of its superiority over its *meaning*. To each of the curves of my letters the heavenly vault confesses its bondage in slavery, and the value of each of my strokes is eternity itself."²

1. Tazkira-i-Khushnawisan, p. 80.

2. Ibid, p. 52.

THE SIMILES OF DHARMADASA

Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya

30

जामदग्न्यवत् ॥ p. 471.

Like the son of Jamadagni.

The son of Jamadagni was able and proud. Twenty-one times he denuded the earth of all the Ksatriyas (क्षत्रिय) by his cruelty. Very rare is, therefore, to be found a man who is able, yet not proud ; and very rare is a man who is proud and yet kind. So said the Blessed one: "Rare is the man who goes from light to light."

31

तिताडयिषुमेषवत् ॥ 471.

Like a ram wishing to strike.

As a ram anxious to strike does not turn back even if he were at a long distance, so one who wants objects of senses cannot give them up even though they may be avoided.

32

गुर्व्वत् ॥ p. 471.

Like a superior.

As a superior person is to be saluted always and one should behave carefully while near him, so wealth is produced always by meritorious acts and is to be protected always from kings and others. How can then that which is to be protected always be one's own?

33

दुहितृविवाहवत् ॥ p. 472.

Like the marriage of a daughter.

A certain man went to Yavana country. He saw there a Yavana. The Yavana after kindling a fire made it say (by means of his magic): "Your daughter will become your wife." That man was intoxicated,

while his young and beautiful daughter was living in his country. He requested the Yavana to teach him his science and received it from him with great difficulty, after having parted with a good deal of his wealth. Then he came back to his country and with a view to making his daughter his wife wanted the fire to declare it. The fire, however, said that the custom of his country was different. So the people (*loka*) are greater even than the law (*dharma*).

34

कम्बोजमेक्ष्यचरणवत् ॥ p. 472.

Like roaming for alms in Kambojas.

A religious mendicant was roaming for alms in the Kamboja country. A man said to him to serve his own purpose: "Don't utter any word, or you will be derided for wandering about in search of food. This is the custom of this country !" The simple mendicant did accordingly, being trustful. The people thought: "It is a machine made by that man who is our rival and is sent to us by him. How the eyes twinkle, (and so on). Everything is done to personate a man." Saying so they praised every limb of his body. Then they, too, made similar machines and sent them to that man. Then he said to the mendicant: "Please speak now !" He did it, and uttered words praying for general welfare. The people were surprised and said: "It is impossible for us to do. Indeed we are delighted by him !" The deceitful and untrustful mendicant fell in disgrace when his true nature was known. And so what purpose would be served by good that is attained by such means as ought to be avoided ?

1. Original *ranjitah* (रञ्जिताः), but should it not be read *vancitah* (वञ्जिताः) 'deceived' ? Tibetan version reads *pham-par-byas* which means in Sanskrit *nirjitah* (निर्जिताः) 'defeated'.

35

मातृसपत्नीदासीवत् ॥ p. 473.

Like the mother, the fellow wife, and the maid servant.

A man had two wives. Of them one lives with her mother, the other having no mother to live with. Now, when the mother sees her daughter she is content ; but the fellow-wife seeing the same woman becomes sad ; while the maid servant is indifferent. So objects of love, etc., have no defined form of their own.

36

अयिशिरःकपालवत् ॥ p. 473.

Like the skull of the head of one absorbed in meditation.

While engrossed in meditation, a person began to have mental illusions. He thought: "A skull is attached to my head !" Another person caused a different skull to fall from his head, saying, "Here it has fallen from your head !" When he came to know this, the man returned to his natural state, his hallucination having disappeared. Thus the unwise do their work somehow or other owing to illusion.

37

कृष्णावदातबलीवर्दसंयोजनवत् ॥ p. 474.

Like the harnessing together of a black and a white bull.

As a black bull is not for being harnessed together with a white bull, nor a white bull with a black one, even though there be two holes for yoking them together, so the organs of the senses are not for the objects (of senses), nor the objects for the organs of senses, even though there be the excitement of love which binds them together.

38, 39

शर्करामोदकवत् ॥

शलाकामुद्रावच्च ॥ p. 474.

(i) Like some sweetmeat made of sugar.

(ii) And like a little splinter and a seal.

The man who has no devotion towards law (*dharma*) which is so helpful and causes such prosperity is foolish and shows thereby only his stupidity, even like *some sweetmeat made of sugar, and a little splinter and a seal* : One is offered some sweetmeat made of sugar which deserves to be tasted in its entirety, but he did not do it. A man attained mastery over two branches of science ; by one he removes all kinds of diseases, after reciting a spell over the little splinter ; by the second science, too, he does the same thing by stamping with the seal. Now, once he told one of his friends: "Take these two sciences ; they will be of help to you." He did not accept them and he suffered from a most troubling disease (leprosy) which would not be treated, and of which he died.

40

जेल्लकपेयप्रेषणवत् ॥ p. 474.

Like sending forth a disciple for a beverage
in the night.

A disciple was always sent forth in the night by his spiritual guide for some beverage. Once the disciple said: "It is not right for a religious mendicant to take beverage in the night; how could you drink it?" He replied: "Because it is water." Another day the novice brought him only water. He said: "Why have you brought quite a different thing?" The novice rejoined: "Where lies the difference, if you drink it (beverage) thinking it to be nothing but water?" So, if things are in their nature void, why are we taught that there exist living beings and their places of residence?

41

बिलप्रवेशवत् ॥ p. 475.

Like entering a pit.

No benefit is derived from entering a pit, and all activities towards it are to be given up, for no purpose is served thereby. In the same way all worldly activities from which nothing substantial can be gained should be abandoned by the wise.

42

मृगतृष्णावत् ॥ p. 476.

Like mirage.

Mirage produces the notion of water but it is not itself water, and whoever feeling thirsty wants to quench his thirst at such a place he is in danger. So there is only the notion of soul *atmasamjna*, (आत्मसंज्ञा) in the five aggregates *skandhas*: form, sensation, perception, co-efficient of consciousness, and consciousness).

43

आचार्यसङ्गसेनबटुवत् ॥ p. 476.

Like the young student of Acarya (आचार्य) Sanghasena.

Only those who have perfect equanimity and whose attachment to the world has been completely severed may realize the highest

bliss, *nirvana*. Nobody reaches this stage as long as there is in him very strong passion or repugnance just as in the case of the young student of Acarya Sanghasena. A young student wanted to hear scriptures recited by Acarya Sanghasena. One day he was asked by him (Acarya Sanghasena), 'Become a lay devotee.' Another day he came and said to the teacher, 'Teacher, I have become a lay devotee.' 'Why so ?' asked the teacher. He replied, 'Because I want to kill Brahmins whenever I may see them !'

44

वध्यमानप्रार्थनावत् ॥ p. 477.

Like the request by one about to be killed.

A man condemned to death was being taken to be killed. He was to be slain immediately, and yet he asked for a vehicle. Even so desires of worldly people never cease.

45, 46

(i) पेयपीतशयितवत् ॥

(ii) पेयोषधसन्देहवच्च ॥ p. 477.

(i) Like one fallen asleep after having drunk his fill.

(ii) And like doubt about medicine to be taken.

There are men who having suffered from disease or by separation from (dear ones) throw themselves down a precipice feeling no love for themselves. Had they completely given up their love for themselves after having convinced themselves that the world is full of sorrow, they could have come near the bliss of *nirvana*, like *one fallen asleep having drunk his fill, and like doubts about medicine to be taken*. A person drank different kinds of drinks, fell asleep and felt still more afflicted. Thus the more the foolish want to be happy the more they are aggrieved. Again, a person saying to himself, 'I shall take medicine' gets himself prepared for it, and then becomes doubtful as to whether this medicine or that is to be taken. Thus he does not get rid of his disease. In the same way foolish people, notwithstanding the pain, being suspicious about taking medicine in the form of detachment from the world, do not adopt any remedy for the pain. In consequence they are not free from disease or miseries, nor do they realize the highest bliss, *nirvana*.

47, 48

(i) यक्षप्रेतप्रव्रजितधर्मपानीयप्रदानवत् ॥

(ii) यक्षप्रत्यवस्थितदर्शनवच्च ॥ p. 478.

(i) Like the Yaksa's offering of water and law to the monk and the ghost respectively.

(ii) And like the act of seeing the Yaksa who stood opposed.

There were three brothers. One of them became a monk, the second a Yaksa with great supernatural powers, and the third a fire-mouthed ghost. The last two went to a monk who, with a view to making the Yaksa understand the cause of arrogance, showed him the evil consequences of wickedness. As regards the ghost, in order to make him know the cause of misery, he first mitigated his unbearable pain of burning by water and then explained to him the evil results of jealousy. In this way there are various ways of teaching the good law according to the various dispositions of the minds of the people.

A father requested a man of a different country to give his daughter in marriage to his son. Unfortunately the father died and the mother said to her son: 'Go and see the bride. There is a Yaksa named so and so ; he is a friend of your father ; ask him to help you. He did so. The Yaksa went across the sky taking him in an aerial car and he saw there a man coming towards them. He told the son, 'Go and frighten the man.' He did it and asked him (the Yaksa) why the man had to be frightened. He said, 'He is a monk. I cannot tolerate his power.' Now the Yaksa took him to the town, and having kept him in one corner of it, he himself entered it in order to search for the bride. Having seen the bride, the Yaksa felt passionate love for her and took her as his own wife. Meanwhile the son, thinking about what the Yaksa might be doing so long, went to make enquiries and saw that the girl was taken away by the Yaksa himself. He then informed him, 'Give up the girl, for she is your daughter-in-law.' Such is the teaching of the Good Law.

49

इभ्यकुलचौरासद्धर्मनिमग्नणवत् ॥ p. 478.

Like a thief's invitation for an evil act when he has entered the house of a wealthy man.

A thief often came to a monastery and was told by a monk : "Accept from us a present." He inquired : "What kind of present ?" The monk said : "Accept as a present moral precepts in the form of Law." The thief rejoined : "I cannot turn back from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, and from falsehood ; but I can desist from adultery." Turning away from it the thief entered the place of a king with a view to committing there a theft. He was invited there for an evil act which he did not like. He was, however, known to the king who honoured him by giving him a woman adorned with all kinds of ornaments.

In the same way it is taught with reference to spiritual meditations that their consequence, *nirvana*, is inevitable. For, if one owing to some cause or other does not realize it in this life one is sure to get it in the next one, without any effort.

50

आन्नभक्षणरोपणवत् ॥ p. 479.

Like the act of eating and of planting a mango.

The man who having eaten a mango plants its seed does not get the fruit immediately ; but he invariably gets the fruit at another time. So one who knows truth will realize *nirvana* in another life, if not in the present one.

51

चाण्डालीफाल्लेहनवत् ॥ p. 479

Like the licking of a shovel by a Candala woman.

As a Candala (चाण्डाल 'an outcaste') woman accused of theft does not dare to lick a shovel, in spite of her being innocent, owing to her fear that how she, who belongs to a Candala family and is therefore inferior, could lick the shovel before the lord. But if she does it, she is at once freed from the accusation. Similarly some foolish men, thinking themselves unfit, do not courageously attempt to attain Buddha-hood, but if they attempt it, according to the law, they must realize it.

52

चाणक्यसुवर्णपरित्यागवत् ॥ p. 479.

Like Canakya's (चाणक्य) giving up gold.¹

1. The Sanskrit is here mutilated and defective. The explanation is given with the help from the Tibetan version.

Canakya has learnt to prepare with a certain medicine one *māṣa* (a particular weight) of gold. A *kākinī* (a weight equal to quarter of a *māṣa*) of gold was already made by him, and now he throws it away thinking, 'I am able to prepare even greater quantity of gold by that means.' In the same way a yogin follows the same path for the complete annihilation of his attachment and other passions by which is effected his momentary disappearance of attachment to body that perishes, though nourished with different enjoyments, just like an ungrateful one. He thinks he can do so following the same means.

53—56

- (i) दीपवत् ॥
- (ii) भृष्टतिलवत् ॥
- (iii) विहायसपरिवाजकवत् ॥
- (iv) वृक्षवच्च ॥
- (i) Like a lamp.
- (ii) Like fried sesamum.
- (iii) Like a sky wanderer.
- (iv) And like a tree.

As long as there are its causes, so long there is a lamp and not otherwise. Seeds of sesamum when fried do not grow again. A sky-wanderer goes through the sky when he mutters a spell upon a piece of realgar ; but if it is stolen he falls down. And when the roots of a tree are taken out it does not grow again. So when causes (i.e. strong adherence to things) are lost there is no *raison d'être* for sorrows, like strong desire, etc.

THE PLACE OF ART IN EDUCATION *

Nandalal Bose

OF the several means devised by man for adding to his knowledge and enjoyment, the most important is language, the vehicle of his literature, science and philosophy. But, as an instrument for receiving and transmitting messages of joy, language has its limitations, and so it has to be supplemented by the arts,—of figuration, music, and dance,—each of which has its own special methods. And, in order to cultivate the understanding and communication of the messages of the outer world through the senses and sensibility of man, it is necessary, for the completion of his education, for him to have a sufficient acquaintance with these different methods of expression. Just as one sense-organ cannot function as another, so also it is not possible for literature alone to do the work of pictures, music and dance. So that, if our ideal of education be a comprehensive one, it must include these latter in its programme, on the same footing in regard to pride of place as the other usual subjects of study.

The place so far given to the arts in our Indian universities is far from adequate. This is perhaps due, as it seems to me, to the idea that these are the monopoly of a special set of professionals, and that outsiders need not concern themselves therewith. There are otherwise highly educated persons who do not feel it derogatory to admit their inability to understand Art; as for the others, they can see no distinction between a photograph and a picture; the outrageous aniline dyes of German coloured stuffs do not revolt them; they gape at a baby doll of Japanese manufacture as the acme of oriental art, and have no qualms in discarding their own inexpensive and shapely earthenware vessels for makeshift tin utensils on the score of their serviceableness.

For this state of things the apathy of our educated men, as well as of our university authorities, is responsible. Though, on a superficial view, we may take pleasure in the apparent advance of our learning, the progressive decline of our aesthetic faculty is appalling to contemplate. The obvious remedy is to insist on the cultivation of the arts as a part of the education of our so-called cultured classes, for

* Translated from the original Bengali by Surendranath Tagore.

it is they who set the standard for the people in general. Loss of the sense of beauty not only cuts off a large source of emotional uplift and enjoyment, but leads to an impairment of mental and even physical health. It is indifference to ugliness that is responsible for the prevailing uncleanness of body and clothing, the accumulation of rubbish and dirt in courtyards, streets and conveyances, the indiscriminate spitting on floors and walls and fouling of public places,—bad example at the top resulting in the spread both of disease and disease-breeding habits throughout the community.

A section of our people look down upon aesthetics as a hobby of the luxurious rich, to be shunned by hard-headed practical men of affairs. They forget that beauty, not expensiveness, is the test of true art. The poor Santal villager keeps his mud cottage neatly plastered and clean, his tattered coverlet and the few earthen vessels he owns, tidily arranged, in marked contrast to the slovenly disorder that pervades the comparatively palatial hostels in which our students live, in whose rooms I have often seen the very picture frames used for hanging cast-off garments, their study tables littered with a medley of tea cups, mirrors and combs, and perhaps paper flowers stuck in a cocoa tin ; showing that while the Santal has a living sense of beauty as part and parcel of his daily life, the hearsay aesthetics imbibed by our candidates for high education are only for occasional erudite display. The same deficiency remains in evidence in their later life as householders ; on their walls hang the loudly coloured portraits of beauteous *mem-sahebs* supplied with calendars and other advertisements, side by side with good pictures where there are any ; in their apparel is displayed an open-breasted coat of European cut surmounting a *dhoti*, while their ladies think nothing of wearing high-heeled shoes of western fashion with their *sarees*. Everywhere, even where there is no question of money, there is betrayed the same lack of a sense of beauty, harmony and proportion.

Then again, another section ask : "Is Art going to fill our bellies ?" Here, again, they should remember that a dual purpose is, as a matter of fact, served by an artistic, as by a literary, training. On the one hand, proficiency in either adds to our joy and wisdom ; on the other, it enables us to earn our livelihood. The two divisions of art activity which perform these different functions are known as arts and crafts. The fine arts rescue us from the drabness of every-day life by lifting us into realms of joy, while the aesthetic sense gives to the objects of our every-day use the touch of beauty which not only makes them

pleasurable, but adds to their commercial value. In fact, our present day poverty may largely be ascribed to the deterioration of our craftsmanship. In any case, there can be no question that the omission of art from culture leads to economic loss.

Lastly, the national importance of art culture cannot be ignored with impunity either. Apart from individual losses due to the ugliness that has crept into our lives, our eyes untrained to beauty are no longer able to appreciate the true worth of the superb works of art,—pictures, sculptures, architecture,—left to us by our aesthetically endowed forefathers, and we thus fail to be borne up by a real, first-hand feeling for our national glories ; in fact experts from foreign lands have to come and explain their beauties to us ! To our shame it must be added that the same is also the case with our modern works of art which so often have to await appraisal abroad before they receive our own recognition.

Now let us think of the means to be adopted.

The stimulation of the aesthetic faculty requires at the outset a reverential approach to, and constant touch maintained with, Beauty, wherever found, in Nature or in Art ; and a deeper understanding of Beauty can be acquired by intimate intercourse and interchange of experiences with those whose aesthetic sense is more highly developed. In regard to these matters, the Universities can help by reserving a place for an Artist in the teaching staff of every affiliated school, and by including in their examinations tests for artistic proficiency. It is not to be supposed that such inclusion of art in the university curriculum will lead to the creation of so many artists, any more than the inclusion of poetry has resulted in the creation of poets. Nevertheless the Universities will have ample reason for satisfaction in the indirect results ; as for example, in the intimacy with Nature and the power of observation gained by the pursuit of pictorial art, which cannot but have their reactions in the fields of literature, science and philosophy as well.

As for the teaching institutions themselves, let us consider in some detail what they can and should do.

Firstly, schoolrooms, reading rooms, and hostels under the control of the school and college authorities should be adorned with good pictures, sculptures and other objects of art, or where such are not available, with good photographs thereof.

Secondly, good art books written in easy language, profusely illustrated, and with historical and critical notes, should be furnished

to the pupils ; and here the universities could help further by offering inducements to get such books written and published.

Thirdly, lantern lectures should be arranged showing properly selected specimens of art, with explanations of their features and merits.

Fourthly, periodical excursions to the nearest museums, picture galleries, and architectural relics should be provided. If in the interest of sport the travelling expenses of teams of players can be paid, why not the expenses of such excursions ? A first-hand acquaintance with art objects is worth ever so many lectures on art. Constant touch with things of beauty needs must gradually give rise to critical discrimination, and awaken and stimulate the aesthetic sense.

Fifthly, seasonal festivals should be held in order to bring about an intimacy of the pupils with nature. In this connection exhibitions of flowers and fruits peculiar to the season should be organised, as far as possible by the pupils themselves, and art productions as well as literary selections, specially referring to the same, should be brought to their notice.

Sixthly, the pupils should be taught to enjoy the seasonal festivals which Nature herself provides,—in the ripening cornfields and blossoming lotus ponds of Autumn, the flaming *palash* and *simul* woods of spring,—more especially in the case of town institutions, by arranging holiday picnics to suitable spots, appropriately clad, with an accompaniment of suitable games and merry-making. Once a love for Nature is implanted in the mind, the source of aesthetic joy can never dry up, for it is Nature that, age after age, has kept man supplied with artistic material.

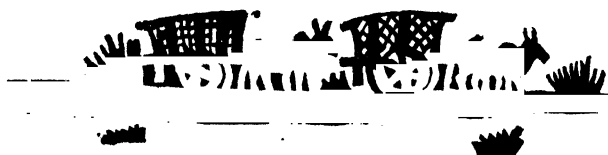
Seventhly, there should be an annual function concerned with creative art to which the pupils should be made to contribute each his or her own creation, however trivial it may be. Such contributions of original work should be kept on exhibition, while processions with music and dance are added to the function so as to make it an event of general rejoicing. The time of the year chosen for such festival will naturally vary with local conditions. For Bengal, autumn would seem to be the most suitable season.

So far as I know, only our Rabindranath has given a fitting place to such all-round cultivation of art in his scheme of education. In this endeavour he has met and is meeting with repeated obstructions. It is because of the neglect of our Universities of this vital side of education, that our parents and guardians look on it askance, as an

unnecessary expenditure of time and energy. Even the very pupils who in their younger days showed a remarkable aptitude and inclination for Art, seem to be overtaken with a suspicion of its uselessness as they approach the time for their matriculation, whereupon their interest in it begins to wane, if not die out altogether. All the more reason why I say that it is high time for our university authorities to bestir themselves in the cause of Art, and thus give a lead to the country.

Coming lastly to our illustrated papers and magazines, I will say nothing more about the very inadequate pictures they sometimes publish than this, that if they cannot get new pictures done by artists of sufficient merit, it is better that they should be content with the reproduction of really good old pictures ; if necessary, taking the advice for this purpose of those who have a true understanding of Art. They should bear in mind that it is not a matter of favouring a contributor or pleasing a friend, but that a great responsibility lies on them in the matter of a proper guidance of the public in regard to art appreciation.

There can be no doubt, I may sum up in conclusion, that on the educated community and the University getting rid of their own apathy towards Art depends the reawakening of the sense of Beauty and the growth of the critical faculty of our countrymen at large.





GOODBYE

'GOODBYE' you said, and turned as if to go ;
Yet I, all knowing, could not understand.
My heart chilled, for 'goodbye' seemed to echo
In the angry hiss of the stinging sand,
Through the storm-racked waste of the seething sky,
And in the frantic fanfare of the seas.
'Goodbye' flung the fierce waves, as they foamed by
The knife-sharp teeth in the rocks ; and in the trees,
And frenzied sobbing winds, I heard again
'Goodbye' . . . With the whole mad world assenting,
Hope held his little frozen hands in vain,
To plead love wasn't dead, but only sleeping.

H. Colville-Stewart

THE SENSE OF BEAUTY *

Rabindranath Tagore

THE advice of our sages of old was to build up the character by leading a life of ascetic discipline during the period of studentship. This, many now-a-days object, is a counsel of hardship fit for producing only a narrowly efficient man ; or, at best, such suppression of the natural affections may result in a saintly man ;—but what about literature and the arts ? In order to have a complete man, the cultivation of his emotions, of his sense of beauty, cannot be neglected.

Quite true. Beauty cannot be ignored. Not self-suppression, but self-development must be the aim of any system of culture. But, as a matter of fact, ascetic discipline during the period of character-building does not imply the cultivation of callousness only. The peasant does not till his field to make a desert of it. When, with his plough he pierces the vitals of the earth, harrows down the clod, and rakes out the weeds, emptying the ground of all content, it may appear, at first sight, a process of devastation. But that is the way to make the field fruitful. Similarly, the proper cultivation of the emotions for ensuring the fullest understanding of Beauty requires at the outset a severe preparation.

During the process of their cultivation, the emotions of man are apt to lead him astray, whence the need of disciplined endeavour for the disciple who would attain the goal, and overcome all obstacles ; it is for gaining eventual fullness of life that he must go through initial privation. But man's evil destiny makes the means tend to overshadow the end. He would learn to sing, but merely acquires vocal skill ; he would be wealthy, but his miserly hoard only makes him an object of commiseration ; he would serve his country, but gets used to remaining content with the passing of resolutions. Similarly we observe that injunctions and prohibitions come to usurp the whole of the disciple's attention, causing him to believe discipline itself to be the *summum bonum*, and so hanker after it for its own sake. And such avidity becomes, like anger, greed, and the other passions, one of the chief enemies in the way of man's progress towards humanity.

* Translated by Surendranath Tagore from the original Bengali (*Sahitya*—1907).

This is but a sign of the inertia in man's nature. Once he starts gathering he goes on and on. We hear of men in the West who have a mania for collecting stamps of the different countries with the post-mark on them, spending any amount of money and toil in this pursuit. A like mania impels some to gather chinaware, others to go hunting after old shoes. The one thing they cannot do is to stop. It would almost seem that the glory of such performances is to be measured by the amount of time, trouble and money wasted.

In the same way the votaries of discipline get into the habit of estimating their gains by the amount of suffering endured. If a beginning is made by sleeping on a hard bed, that is followed up by laying a blanket on the bare floor, and then by dispensing with it altogether. Such progressive privation ends in self-immolation. This is nothing but allowing the pursuit of *freedom from desire* to become itself an overwhelming desire, like strangling oneself by trying forcibly to tear away the noose round one's neck. No doubt, by thus cultivating discipline for its own sake, by piling austerity on austerity, all sense of beauty can be effectually tortured out of one's system. But, by undergoing a properly adapted course of discipline, with the aim of arriving at fullness of development kept steadily in view, no human faculty need be hurt, but each one, rather, will be nourished and strengthened in the process.

In other words, the foundation which has to uphold must be firm. That which is to give and maintain the shape of the variegated superstructure, must itself be simple and unyielding. The human body is soft and pliable, but without its rigid frame of bones it would have been a mere lump of flesh. So, likewise, must the foundation of wisdom, of joy, be severely hard, else wisdom would end in fanciful dreams, and joy in senseless intoxication. This foundation is discipline, which includes discriminate approval and pitiless rejection ; like the gods it bears boons in one hand, and in the other a thunderbolt ; it must be as firm in building up as in breaking down, whichever may be necessary. Discipline is essential if Beauty is to be enjoyed to the uttermost, otherwise, like a child left to itself with a platter of food, who scatters about, and smears its body with, the most of it, getting but little into its stomach, we wastefully wallow in most of the things of beauty presented to us, hardly gaining anything of real joy therefrom.

Coming to the creation of Beauty, that also is beyond the competence of undisciplined imagination. One cannot light one's room by setting it on fire, but only by bringing the flame under proper

control. The same is the case with our desires. If allowed to flare up uncontrolled, they would burn to ashes the beauty to which it should be their function to give colour and radiance. On the other hand, it is also true that whenever our desires sit down to a feast, Nature contributes thereto her decorations of beauty. The fruit not only satisfies our hunger, but delights our senses with form and colour, fragrance and taste. In spite of the fact that our need for nourishment would have impelled us to eat it even without any of these accompaniments, we are nevertheless treated to this feast of beauty, over and above our bare requirements.

To what end is this superfluous gift of Beauty shaping us? Its purpose seems to be to prevent our animal appetites from ruling us as sole masters, to loosen the noose they would cast round our mind. The Demon of Hunger roars out its behest : *eat you must, you have no choice but to obey*. Whereupon the Goddess of Beauty, with her gracious smile that rejoices our hearts and hides from our sight the frown of the Demon, relegates to the basement the hunger of the body, and spreads on the upper floor her decorated feast of joy. Necessity, which humiliates man, is repaired by beauty that is beyond necessity.

It is because of the higher tone that beauty gives to the satisfaction of our appetites that the creature who was once an unmitigated animal, knowing no law beyond the urge of his senses, has now become human, acknowledging the claims of love. Now, even when we are hungry, we cannot gorge ourselves anyhow like an ogre or an animal, but lose our appetite if the food be not decently served ; that is to say, hunger alone no longer sways us, but beauty must be there to temper it. We caution our children not to eat like gluttons for that is ugly to look at. Thus has beauty brought discipline into our lives ; and, over and above mere satisfaction, it has given us joy. In necessity is our poverty, it makes of us slaves : the joy of beauty comes to liberate us.

So we arrive at this, that ultimately beauty makes for discipline. It gives man to drink of the nectar that strengthens him to withstand the onslaught of his rude appetites. He who feels restive when asked to control his passions because they are *bad*, cheerfully does so when he finds they are *ugly*. And as Beauty thus softly leads us towards discipline, so does discipline, in turn, make us more deeply conscious of Beauty. We cannot taste of the honey at its core unless we poise ourselves into stillness before it. It is the chaste and devoted, not the light and flighty woman who achieves true love.

Chastity is the calmness of steadfast devotion that enables us to penetrate to the mystic depths of Beauty. If our quest be not chaste, we do no more than keep flitting about it, mistaking intoxication for joy, and so fail to attain that tranquillity of satisfaction that follows the gain of the real.

Let me remind you of the ancient story of Utanka, the hermit's son, who wanted to have a sight of the Queen. On coming to ask the King's permission, he was told he would find her in the inner apartments, but when he went there, he could not see her, because he was then unclean. The Queen of Beauty, who dwells in the secret chamber of all that is glorious in the universe, is ever before us, but she is invisible if our hearts and mind be not clean. When we are distracted with dissipation, turbulent with intoxication, the radiantly robed Queen of Beauty vanishes from our sight.

I am not saying this as a moral lecture from the standpoint of Ethics but speak from that of Aesthetics, of Art. In our scriptures we are likewise told that not only for the sake of the Good, but in the pursuit of happiness also, must we be continent. That is to say, if you want the fulfilment of your desires, you must keep them in check ; if you would enjoy beauty do not let loose your passions ; be tranquil ; be chaste ; else you will confuse the objects of your desire with real beauty ; you will vainly try to possess by grabbing and pawing with your hands that which belongs to the realm of the spirit.

People of the kind that are not so easily taken in, will rise in protest, complaining that all this is undiluted poetry. Has it not been seen, they will ask, that skilled artists, the successful creators of beauty, have not usually led lives reputed for their continence ? Their biographies, rather, are often unfit to be read. So let us stop poetising, and confine our discussion to the facts. To which let me ask in reply, are we to pin our faith upon so-called facts alone ? Most of what may be called facts about men are never obviously before us. We think we see the whole when only a small part is presented to our gaze. That is why, in discussions about men, we feel lightly let off indeed if what one calls white, another only calls grey, for the chances are he will call it black ! Napoleon is a demi-god to some, to others a demon. Some claim that the caste system has saved Hindu society, others assert that it is proving ruinous. And yet both sides refer to facts.

There is no denying that we come up against opposites at every

turn in the concerns of men. What, however, appear as contradictions on a superficial view, are sure to have their reconciliation somewhere in the depths. So that it cannot be said that truth is to be found visibly floating on the surface of things ; it must be sought where it lies immersed out of our sight ; whence arise all these differences and quarrels, in which both sides rely on the same historical documents. Thus you see, that in discussing the apparent inconsistency in the lives of some great artists, my plea cannot be summarily put out of court on the ground of facts.

It is manifestly absurd to say that the power of creating beauty arises out of weakness or instability of character, out of indiscipline. Even if the testimony of one set of facts favours this view, we shall simply conclude that other necessary facts are not before us, that, in fact, the principal witness is absconding ! If a band of robbers happens to be flourishing, that does not lead to the conclusion that robbery is a means to prosperity. On the contrary, we hardly find it necessary to labour the point that such success as they are temporarily achieving is due to the honour they maintain amongst themselves, and that their eventual downfall will be brought about by their failure to respect the rights of others. We often find the same person calculating in his business, but spendthrift in his dissipations. This does not mean that those who have unbridled passions become successful business men. It is enough to say that in the making of money he is more careful than the ordinary run of men, but that in his private life his business instincts are overpowered by his still greater passion for dubious pleasures.

Where the person, whose pursuit is art, is really an artist, there he is ascetic. There laxity will not do. There mind and heart needs must be disciplined. It is, however, given to but few to be strong enough to discipline themselves all round. Some parts of their characters, therefore, remain in a state of laxity. That is because man is on the way from a lower to a higher level, but has not yet reached the top. My point is, that whatever of permanent value we achieve in our lives, is due to the strength given us by the binding force of discipline, what we call *Dharma*, and not to any departure therefrom. In creating immortal works of Art, artists have proved that their character has its strength ; if they have spoilt their own lives by dissipation they have but shown where lies its weakness ; there passion, the enemy, has brought them nothing but tribulation by driving them to disloyalty against their own ideal of beauty.

Then, my opponent will claim, we see that the sense of beauty and lack of discipline can co-exist in one and the same person, the wolf and the sheep drinking at the same spring. Yes, the cub and the lamb may gambol together, but no longer when they are full-grown. It is only so long as the sense of beauty is not fully developed, that these aberrations are possible. When it fills the whole being, then indiscipline cannot survive along with it, for the two are mutually exclusive. Let me explain why.

We are told that the sage, Viswamitra, in a fit of rebelliousness made a rival world in opposition to that of the Creator. That was a creation of his anger, of his pride and so it proved to be incompatible with the rest of the universe, remaining isolated in conflict therewith, and eventually destroying itself after causing and suffering sorrows innumerable. Our unchecked passions thus try to create a world of their own, out of tune with its surroundings. Our anger, our greed, bring about distortions that make the small appear big, the big small; transient things take on the guise of permanence, the eternal remains invisible. That which we lust after is so magnified that it obscures for us all greater truths. And thus do such creations of our passions come into conflict with those of Providence.

Consider the river. Each wavelet separately raises its head, but all of them move on singing to the self-same sea, none obstructing the others. But when an eddy is set up, it becomes a whirl which stays where it is, madly careering round and round, impeding progress and dragging everything downwards, its contrariness preventing it from keeping still, as well as from moving forward. That is what happens when any of our desires get out of hand. They keep us tied to a point, unable to follow the concourse of the universe. Our being, wandering round and round this centre, empties its all, and seeks to draw others too, into the abyss.

Some profess to see a kind of beauty in such frenzied dance. It sometimes seems to me that the literature of Europe takes a special delight in picturing this kind of mad revel, without aim, without end, devoid of peace. But we cannot look on this as the perfection of culture; it appears to us as a deviation from human excellence. What may have charm when viewed within a narrow frame, discloses its lack of beauty when seen against a larger background. The libertine, oblivious of the world around him, deems the scene of his drunken carousal with his boon companions to be the seventh heaven; but to the sober spectator who views it amidst the world at large, the

spectacle is disgusting. When the fire of any raging passion casts an unnatural glare all around, its ugliness is easily detected on a comparative view with what is outside it. Only one who has not the power to take such a view, of part against whole, of small against big, is liable to mistake intoxication for joy, distortion for beauty. That is why, for the complete understanding of beauty, it is necessary to cultivate tranquillity, a state that is impossible for a distracted, undisciplined mind to attain.

Let us now see what the full understanding of Beauty implies. What the uncultured admire as beautiful, the cultured man may reject as ugly. The reason is that the cultured mind is not restricted within the limitations of the untutored mind,—it is larger within and without, in space as well as in time, and its content is much more varied. That is why there can be no measure for appraisal common to both.

An ignoramus about art will be delighted with a canvas displaying a plump, highly-coloured figure. He has no mental background against which to view a picture ; he has no higher criterion than sensual appeal to judge it by ; he surrenders to the first thing that arrests his attention. The understanding man is not so overcome by external features. He looks for a harmonious whole, taking the principal with the subsidiary, the centre with the sides, the foreground with the background. What he wants to see is not a matter for the eye alone, but requires penetration by the mind ; whence the deeper satisfaction that he, in turn, receives. For the same reason, many artists do not indulge in wealth of detail, their classic dignity admits of no finery, in consequence of which there is a severity about their creations, which the ordinary man will pass over for their bareness, but the austerity of which will add to the pleasure of the connoisseur.

So we come to this, that the eye-sight must be supplemented by the insight of the mind, in order to see Beauty in its greatness. The attaining of this insight demands special culture.

The mind, again, has many levels. The field of vision, open to our intellect alone, is extended as it is carried deeper by our emotions. It is further enlarged by our moral discrimination, and becomes infinite to our spiritual vision. The human face attracts us more than the prettiness of the flower, because in the former there is not only form and colour, but the light of consciousness, the play of intelligence, the charm of emotional expression ; so that it appeals alike to our senses, our mind and our heart, and thus occupies

a vast field not easily to be exhausted. And those who are saints among men, who come to us as embodiments of the goodness of God, they attract our whole being so powerfully, that we ourselves can assign no limit to their influence. The son of the king who left his kingdom in order to find surcease for the sorrows of humanity,—the radiance of his beauty has drawn forth from the hearts of men poems and songs, pictures and sculptures ; numberless creations of beauty, in unending profusion.

There you are again, the careful people will exclaim, making use of beauty as a moral text ! Why insist on mixing up the two ? What is good is good, what is beautiful is beautiful ; the one attracts us in one way, the other in a different way ; and the difference of their appeal has caused them to be given different names. That which is good pleases us because it conduces to our welfare ; but why beauty pleases us is more than we can fathom.

What I have to remark is, that it does not amount to the whole truth to say that the Good pleases us because of what it does for us. That which is really good is both useful and beautiful, that is to say, it has a mysterious attraction for us over and above that of such purposes of ours as it may serve. The moralist declares its value from the ethical standpoint, the poet seeks to make manifest its unutterable beauty.

The Good, I repeat, is beautiful to us, not merely because of any purpose it may serve. Bread is useful, clothes are useful, and so are shoes and umbrellas ; nevertheless these do not thrill us with their beauty. But the fact that Lakshmana insisted on accompanying his brother Rama in his exile, makes our heart-strings vibrate in music. It becomes a theme fit to be sung into permanence with beautiful words set to a beautiful tune. I am not saying this because it is good for society that the younger should devotedly serve his elder brother, but because devotion is a beautiful thing. Why beautiful ? Because what is good is in deep harmony with all creation, and consequently finds a response in the hearts of all men. Whenever we find the Good and the True in harmony, their beauty reveals itself to us. Pity is beautiful, forgiveness is beautiful, love is beautiful ; like the full moon, like the full-blown lotus, they are not in conflict within themselves nor with the rest of the world. They help in the progress of the universe, the universe is of help to them. Lakshmi, our Goddess of Wealth, represents not only beauty and power, but also goodness. Beauty is the picture of the Good ; Goodness is the reality behind Beauty.

Let us now discuss the points of resemblance between Goodness and Beauty.

We have seen that Beauty overcomes necessity, wherefore we regard it as power, a power that liberates us into love out of the penury of self-seeking. We find that same power in Goodness. Wherever we come across a brave man giving up all self-interest, even life, for the Right, we catch sight of a wonderful manifestation that is more to us than our individual joys and sorrows, greater than our self-interest, grander than our very life. The vision we get is of the power by virtue of which Goodness counts not sorrow nor privation as loss; nor does any injury to self-interest injure it. So like Beauty, Goodness also impels us towards voluntary self-denial.

Beauty displays God's majesty in the midst of His creation; Goodness does the same in the lives of men. Goodness not only shows beauty as a thing to be seen by the eye, to be understood by the mind, but brings it home in a larger, a deeper connection; it makes of an attribute of God an attribute of man. It is because of its intimate nearness to our humanity that we do not always see goodness as beauty. When we do realise it as such, our whole being overflows like a river in flood. Then we know that nothing in the world can be more beautiful.

We have a shastric saying that clemency is an ornament of the strong. But not everyone has the vision to see in mildness the manifestation of strength in its beauty; the average person is more impressed by its depredations, for then does its might extort his respect. Modesty, again, is said to be the ornament of woman. But who is it that can see the beauty of modesty as superior to that of woman's external embellishments?—only he whose view of beauty is not narrow. For realising the vast calmness of the whole expanse comprehending what appear as waves in immediate vicinity, it is necessary to get a broader view from a higher standpoint. In order to achieve such largeness of vision, culture conducing to intimacy of understanding and tranquillity of inward poise is essential.

Our ancient poets had no qualms in appreciatively dwelling on the beauties of a pregnant woman,—a subject that would make a European poet shrink with a sense of false shame. True, the radiance of pregnancy offers but little of a feast for the eye; yet the figure of a woman on the eve of the fulfilment of her womanhood is invested with a glorious expectancy. Whatever deficiency there may be in regard to features ordinarily accounted as making for beauty, is more

than made up by the less obvious charm revealed to the discernment of the reverential mind.

When the clouds of Autumn have exhausted their showers and wander aimlessly in fleecy lightness, the riot of colour lavished on them by the setting sun dazzles the eye. But when, on the break of the rainy season, the new-formed clouds, tense with their impending gifts, like the bursting udders of a great black cow with calf, disdain to show in their bellying masses of dark moisture the least play of flickering colour, their beauty none the less satisfies our mind so completely that no corner of it remains unfilled ; for, over their grateful shade is spread the promise of relief for the stifling world below, revival of the thirsting soil of the cornfields, replenishment of the attenuated streams and dried up pools. They hang motionless over the earth with the entrancing grandeur of bounteous fulfilment.

Wherever beauty thus achieves completion, it discards all profusion of external display. The flower sheds its superfluity of colour and scent to attain the richer sweetness of the fruit. In fruition Goodness and Beauty become one. And whoever has once been privileged to witness their union, can never again confound Beauty with the satisfaction of sensual desires. His life will become simple, not owing to the loss of, but by virtue of the perfection attained by, his sense of Beauty.

Where was Asoka's pleasure garden ?—we find no trace of it amidst the ruins of his palace. But the pillars and stupas, of no mean architectural merit, erected by him near the Bodhi tree at Budh Gaya, are still standing. On the ever-memorable sacred spot where Lord Buddha came by the realisation of the way to the cessation of human suffering,—just there the Emperor Asoka raised aloft his offerings of beauty. In this India of ours we thus find in many a mountain fastness, on many a lonely sea-shore, temples and other works of art expressive of religious emotion, but seldom any relic of a scene of royal revelry. Why is it that no abiding tribute was offered by our kings of old to what gave pleasure to themselves during their lifetime, but that they raised such deathless memorials in out of the way places, away from towns and capitals ? The reason is, that in these secluded retreats they were moved to pay their homage of wondering adoration to something beyond themselves. Man's own creations of beauty stretch forth their arms in worship to that which is still more beautiful ; what is great in man prostrates itself before that which is still greater. The soundless language of his art proclaims: Look, oh look at Him who is



SANGHAMITRĀ (Asoka's daughter)

Nandalal Bose

Beautiful, who is Great ! It has never tried to say: Behold how beautiful are the objects that gave me pleasure.

In the union of the Good and the Beautiful, of Vishnu with Lakshmi, is true perfection. This is the underlying idea in all civilisations. The day will certainly come when Beauty will no longer be monopolised by selfishness, scarred by envy, exhausted by greed. Beauty can never be realised in its purity, unless viewed apart from our sensual desires. What we gain by such uncultured glimpses of it does not give us full satisfaction, but merely increases our thirst ; it does not serve to nourish us, but like indulgence in intoxicants, it destroys our healthy appetite. It is for this reason that puritan moralists warn us to beware of the lure of Beauty ; in dread of the risks of its incomplete worship, thy consider it safer to abjure it altogether. But the proper counsel is to cultivate, from the outset, that self-restraint which will enable it to be pursued and won without danger. That was the reason why discipline was enjoined by our sages of old,—never for depriving life of its joy.

Let us now come back to and finish with the question of whither this quest for Beauty leads us ; for what purpose the sense of beauty has been vouchsafed to us ?

When beauty is apprehended only by our sense organs, a sharp distinction stands out between what does and what does not appear beautiful. When our mind joins in, this distinction ceases to be so immediate, for what attracts the mind may not appear pleasing to the eye at first sight ; where some relation or harmony between the beginning and the end, the prominent and the implicit, the part and the whole, is the source of our pleasure, we are not overpowered by mere external appearance. Further, when our moral sense adds its contribution, the opposition between beauty and ugliness fades away to our enlarged perception. Then goodness appears not merely as pleasurable but as beautiful. When Shiva, in disguise, sought to test Uma's love for himself by pointing to the lack of attractions of age, of features and social qualities in her betrothed, Uma replied : My heart steadfastly reposes in Him who is my ideal. For, in the realm of the ideal, joy does not depend on physical ingredients, and the rigid line separating the beautiful from the non-beautiful is obliterated.

What about the distinction between good and bad ? While these opposites still remain we can arrive at no finality, for the true goal can be but one, not two. So long as the river current flows on, it has need of its banks, but no longer when it has reached its journey's end in

the boundless sea. The current involves the opposites ; its cessation their reconciliation. Wood has to be rubbed on wood to kindle a fire, but no further rubbing is necessary when the fire flames up. When our sense of beauty, sparkling out at each conflict of good and bad, pleasurable and painful, finally bursts into flame, all separateness of parts and their friction is set at rest. What happens then ? Then Truth and Beauty become one. Then we perceive that in the realisation of Truth is Joy, that therein is supreme Beauty.

In this world of fleeting forms where do we find any taste of Truth ? Wherever our mind can find its repose. The people in the street come and go, they are but shadows to us, our realisation of them is feeble, so that they give us but little of joy. But we intimately feel the truth of a friend, who gives repose to our mind, and to the extent he is true for us he gives us joy. The foreign country which to us is but a geographical name, is so true to those who belong to it that for it they are willing to lay down their lives. So we see that wherever there is a realisation of truth there is joy. Where joy is absent, there the truth may be known, but not felt, not obtained as one's own. Understood in this way, the realisation of Truth and the realisation of Beauty are found to be one and the same.

Towards such realisation of Truth all our literature, all our arts are consciously or unconsciously tending. Truth, and nothing but Truth, is what they have been trying to make more and more manifest. That which we were unable to perceive, and which therefore was untrue for us, the poet brings before our vision and thereby enlarges for us the field of truth and joy. Things that escaped our attention as seemingly petty, are being day by day discovered in their truth by literature and art, by whose hall-mark of beauty they are converted from stranger to friend. Things that were only objects for the senses become attractions for the mind. The modern poet has said : Truth is beauty, beauty truth. The Upanishads tell us that all appearances, from the speck of dust at our feet to the stars in the heavens, are manifestations of His immortal joy.

It is the purpose of literature and art to realise and communicate this essential joy and immortality of Truth. The wonder and joy of man's discovery of Truth is recorded in words, forms, colours and sounds by the impulse of his emotions. It is a revelation followed by man's own creation. Thus were the pyramids placed as admiration signs on the vast expanse of the desert ; or, when an island harbour was found to be specially pleasing, an overhanging cliff was carved

into the Elephanta caves of Bombay ; and immense stones were carried from long inland distances to the lonely East-facing sea-beach for raising the Konarak temple in permanent salutation to the sun rising out of the sea. In the same way, literary works arise out of and give rise to the different epochs.

Thus along the banks of the fleeting world, wherever man's mind has once found rest, it has put up sign posts of beauty ; indicating landing places whereon it may dwell and whence it is invited to gaze on the face of Truth. These records of man's literature, art, history, and other creations, are ever growing more and more voluminous. We can hardly imagine to-day how narrow our world would have been for us, but for these sign posts, marking on either side the discoveries of truth, discoveries that have converted the objective world of our senses into a world subject to our heart.

That the universe is a series of causes and effects, of events connected in space and time, other branches of knowledge are there to teach us. Literature and Art bring home to us more and more what the Rishi of the Upanishad has declared, that we also live, move and have our being in the immortal joy which is Truth in its beauty.

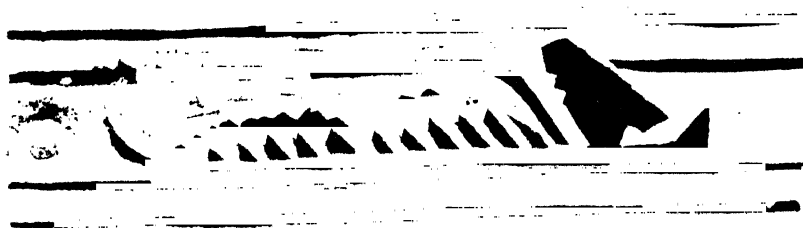


OLD HARBOURS

THEY pass you by, full-breasted, slow they sail
Those splendid ships you once hailed as your own ;
Forsaken now, on your unlistening shore
Only the sullen waters groan.

Far on your battered ramparts Evening brings
Brave tales of yon trembling upon her lips,
While to your time-forgotten harbours steal
Bewildered ghosts of ancient ships.

E. Helen d'Alvis



A BEGGAR'S DREAM !

AND what is Art but a beggar's dream
To catch the splendour of the gleam
That trembles on the tipsy stream,
Demented by the broken light
Of a far off indifferent moon—
That works the supersensuous swoon !

And what provokes the lover's plight ?
Is it the blaze of the brazen noon
That works the supersensuous swoon
Of love betrayed by the self-same gleam
Troubling the self-same beggar's dream
And dancing on the drunken stream ?

K. K.

REVIEWS

The Briton In India

By Prof. T. J. George—Published by the Associated
Printers, Madras.

THE book is a study in racial relations, and is, as such, a pioneer effort. The author rightly claims that it is "the first systematic attempt that has been made by any writer, Indian or English, on the problem of racial relations."

The object of the book is "to draw the immediate attention of the English people to the unfair and irritating nature of the racial situation at present and to appeal to them to revise their views and opinions on the whole problem, in the light of the profound political and other changes that are taking place around them."

With this object, we candidly confess, we are in no sympathy. A sentimental appeal to the Briton to look upon the Indian as a brother is worse than useless. We would even go so far as to say that we consider such an appeal to be degrading. Tagore's beautiful line : পরের পায়ে ধরে মান ভিক্ষা করা সকল ভিক্ষার ছার। "To beg for honour is the worst of dishonours" holds good for all time. It is an incontrovertible fact that the Britisher is in India by right of conquest, and not on sufferance. It is not easy for him to forget this fact, surrounded as he is by invertebrates. He will of himself change his racial outlook, when it suits his book to do so. A display of inferiority complex on the Indian's part is not, we are afraid, likely to hasten the progress.

After all it is a truism that one always gets the treatment that one deserves. When Vasco da Gama knelt before the Zamorin of Calicut, or when Sir Thomas Roe bowed before the imperial throne of Jehangir, the foreigner never thought it either expedient or safe to display any arrogance towards the children of the soil. No doubt a few decades later Tavernier wrote contemptuously that a single French brigade under Condé or Turenne could smash up the whole army of the Great Moghul; but that was obviously no more than an unmeaning piece of Gallic bombast. For, the astute jeweller was subservient enough to the Moghul as long as he resided in India. In fact, all European adventurers, great and small, had a wholesome regard for constituted authority, until Paradis, a French commander in the South broke the spell on the field of St. Thomé. With a

small body of sepoy's equipped in the European fashion and drilled by European officers he put to flight a huge native army as brave as any to be found in India in those days. Then set in a period of land grabbing. The Briton, the Frenchman and the Hollander rushed into the struggle for acquisition of territory ; adventurers who had come out to India as peaceful quill-drivers in trading companies developed into gallant and swaggering swashbucklers. The Portuguese had set up as rulers in Goa long before this, but their power was now on the wane, and they were no longer looked upon as serious rivals by these latter day adventurers.

The Portuguese in India had always attached far greater importance to the spread of Christianity than to the acquisition of either wealth or of territory. They mixed freely with the people of this country and inter-married with Indian Christians without any compunctions whatsoever. We get a very good idea of their dealings with different classes of Indians from Du Barrie's *Histoire des Indes Orientales* written about the commencement of the seventeenth century. There can be little doubt that the European in India did not develop racial arrogance till a much later period.

It is interesting to trace the growth of this complex. Certain events occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century which had an important bearing on this growth. The year 1757 saw the Briton established in Bengal : Plassey was fought and won by Clive during that year. As a military achievement, the battle was insignificant. But from the political point of view its effects were very far reaching indeed. It provided the British Company with definite status, and a safe base of operations. When at Panipat in 1761 the Pathan dealt a wellnigh fatal blow to the Marathas, the Briton was in a position to take full advantage of the situation. Within ten years of Plassey he was able to crush completely his two European rivals—the French at Wandewash and the Dutch at Bidura.

It is for the historian to judge whether the ultimate success of the British in India was a case of survival of the fittest, or whether the British had more luck than their rivals. Clive and his colleagues were selfish and dishonest to the core, though it must be admitted that their standard of honesty was no lower than the general standard in Hanoverian England. It is worthy of note that the same Britisher who was so eminently successful in India made a complete mess of things in America. How was this ? The historian Malleon in his book, *Our decisive battles in India*, has shown how fortune favoured his

countrymen throughout in this country, how their intrigues prior to every decisive battle were invariably successful and how even the good qualities of the Indian races helped them forward. Be that as it may. But since India was destined by Providence to go under foreign rule, she could choose no better master than the Briton—none that we know of from the ancient Roman to the present day Jap. He may be insular, he may be pigheaded, he may be lacking in imagination, but there is no gainsaying the fact that in the main he is a gentleman.

To pick up the thread of our narrative, we do not find even in Warren Hastings' time any pronounced signs of racial arrogance. Hastings himself had far reaching ambitions for his people, but he was a man of letters, cultured and refined, and he did not look upon the native of India as an inferior being. It is easy enough to cite numerous instances to prove this. I shall be satisfied with only two or three. One of the best friends that this Proconsul had in India was the Maratha Bramhin Beneram of Gwalior. He himself described this Pandit in a letter to his wife, "as one whom you know I reckon among my first friends." A second instance is the high regard in which Hastings held the great Mahratha ruler Mahadji. When Ahmed Shah Abdali was ill-treating and torturing the Emperor at Delhi the Shahajada came to Hastings asking for succour and redress. The reply that the Governor-General gave to him was: "Go to Mahadji Sindhia, he is the one man in India who can save your father." Hastings used to smoke the *hooka* by choice. He used to confer for hours with Pandits and Maulvis; when he went out in the street he surrounded himself with a gorgeous Oriental equipage. He was a Nabob in the true sense of the word without any meanness or narrowness. His employment of Indians in some of the highest jobs was a clear index of the absence of any racial complex.

We have mentioned before how Paradis demonstrated the efficiency of a disciplined and drilled Sepoy force. The lesson of St. Thomé was learnt not only by the European powers but by every ruler of note in India. We find in the latter half of the 18th century, that every native state possessed at least some regiments trained up to the European standard of efficiency by European officers. And such officers were not wanting. After Wandewash French adventurers flocked to native courts burning with a desire to get even somehow with the Britisher who had supplanted them. The notable names are Lally and Bussy at Hyderabad, De Boigne and Perron at Gwalior, Merkara at Monghyr and, later on, Avitabile and Court at Lahore.

The presence of these European adventurers in native courts tended if anything to prevent the growth of racial estrangement. Upto the end of the 18th century racial feelings continued to be in much the same condition as in Hastings' time. The Indian had not yet developed inferiority complex to any large extent. He still hoped to hold his own against the foreigner. One ruler went so far as to enrol himself as a citizen of the French Republic. Tipoo Saheb certainly did not suffer from any feeling of inferiority. The lordly and super-arrogant way in which he received Englishmen in open Durbar is well-known. On one occasion he made a raid into Portuguese territory, carried off a number of captives to Seringapatam and forcibly converted them to Islam.

The beginning of the 19th century saw a definite improvement in the political status of the Company. After Wellesley's Maratha and Mysore Wars, Great Britain became the paramount power in India, without any serious rivals to fear. Already in Cornwallis' time the policy had been instituted of excluding the native of India from all important posts. The whole administration passed into the hands of a well organised covenanted service. The institution of this ruling caste, exclusive and superior, had a most important bearing on the racial relations in this country. The attitude of the then enlightened Briton towards the Orient and its culture is summed up in the writings of Macaulay. Bentinck's administration marked the stage when the work of reforming and educating the native was taken up. A new type of educated Indian came into existence with a parasitic mentality, who looked up to the Briton as a sort of Messiah, sent to this country for his deliverance from ignorance and superstition. The Briton, on the other hand, was trying to convince himself that he was in India on a Providential mission—a mission to civilise the benighted children of the soil. Dalhousie's policy of annexation, his disregard for treaty rights and for the feelings of the natives concerned was but a natural sequence of this belief. Then came the Sepoy Mutiny. It was the direct result of the policy of annexation and of the various innovations made by government in order to civilise the native. It had no connection whatsoever with the newly created educated middle classes who were quite content to continue and thrive under the enlightened rule of a western nation. Neither the atrocities of the Mutineer nor the subsequent reprisals of the Briton affected him in any way. When the new regime was inaugurated he faithfully took his place as a humble satellite of the Briton. But things could not long remain where they

were. The Universities came into existence and large numbers of Indians began to receive higher education. In the meantime important events were happening in the world. The emancipation of Italy, the unification of Germany, the rebirth of Japan as a modern power, the political struggles of Ireland, all these had their influence on the neo-Indian. The time soon came when he began to dream golden dreams about the future of his own Motherland. A national political organisation came into existence and very soon the Briton became seriously scared. What ! were these cultural hybrids whom he had brought into existence seeking to supplant him ! In newspaper and periodical, in poetry and in fiction, he heaped insults and ridicule on these unfortunate children who were crying for the moon. They did not deserve this treatment, for they were not as yet disloyal to the British connection : their only fault was a lack of humour—want of a sense of proportion. They took themselves far too seriously. A little more of kindness and sympathy from the Britisher at that critical stage would possibly have saved infinite trouble in the future. But that was not to be. Wounded in vanity, disappointed in their hopes, these unhappy products of an alien civilization at last turned their eyes on the past history of their own country, and took their stand on their own ancient culture. Indian politics assumed a new and a definite shape. Its leadership passed into the hands of men whose ideals were diametrically opposed to those of the West and who loudly proclaimed the superiority of their own ancient culture. A demand for autonomy, absolute and unequivocal, formed the basis of the new political creed. It could hardly be expected in reason that the Britisher would concede this and gracefully retire from the dominant position he had created for himself. The political struggle therefore continues and is not unnaturally accompanied by a considerable amount of bitterness and acrimony. But this is not all. A few desperate souls have drifted into the morass of revolutionary politics. Their activities had added substantially to the feelings of racial rancour. We do not see how this rancour could have been avoided. A philosophic calm is not easy to attain where one's own vital interests are at stake.

There was an interval when things certainly looked more hopeful. From 1914 to 1918 when the Arab, the Indian and the African were holding the trenches in three continents side by side with their white comrades, to many it appeared as if our race and colour problems had vanished for good and for all. But prejudices die hard and pious platitudes have never swayed this very sordid world of ours. It is not

that the British politician has not attempted to apply salve to the growing sore of racial bitterness in India. But the treatment has so far not been very successful, and we hear complaints that the application of the salve has never been timely.

We have no desire to be drawn into a discussion of current politics. But a full consideration of racial relations is impossible without going deep into the political and economic interests of the two races that face each other in India today. In the book under review the author has in the main avoided going into politics but occasionally one comes across passages such as this—

“From one point of view there appears to be no more dangerous foe for the British Empire than some of the members of the Conservative Party. By their intemperate views and insulting pronouncements and provoking language, they have helped in drawing together the bonds of unity among the different ranks and groups of politicians in India. Racial and political suppression will only serve to inflame the spirit of resistance of the people of India. It is hardly possible to dwell too strongly on the futility of force and coercion in the whole matter” (p. 583).

So far one can understand, though an Indian would ordinarily welcome anything that helps to draw together the different groups of politicians.

On the same page, however, there is another passage very much more difficult to follow.

“This attitude of superiority is inextricably woven into the very texture of English institutions. * * * It seems evident in the dealings of the English clubs and hotels towards the Indians.”

We fail to understand how any community can be debarred from having their own clubs and hotels. Surely it would be grossly unfair to thrust unwelcome outsiders on any group of people who wish to live together or spend their evenings in a congenial fashion ! We wonder if the learned professor would even presume to dictate to private persons whom they should receive in their houses, and whom they should not.

If an Englishman says : “We take no interest in Indian culture or philosophy. Why should we ? We are not made that way, and are not here for that purpose. But if you ask us to be candid, we say downright, that taken as a whole they are an inferior race. Their company gives us no pleasure, nor ours them. We have nothing in common with them. We don’t want them near our women, and the

only way to avoid trouble and friction is to do our job as laid down, and when not doing it to keep to ourselves", he is only telling the truth according to his lights. The Indian need not agree with him, but he is bound to admit that the statement is honest and frank.

The author likewise quotes Kipling's famous couplet :

"Oh, East is East, and West is West
And never the twain shall meet."

with disapproval and calls Kipling's sentiments mistaken and mischievous. We think he is rather unfair to the famous poet ; for who can gainsay that East is East, and West is West ? We go farther and say that the East should remain East and the West should remain West. As to the twain meeting, they will meet often enough when self-interest dictates it. Do we not see the race-proud but shrewd Scotchman walking arm in arm with the Marwari everyday on the Stock Exchange, like two long lost brothers !

In Chapter VI Professor George gives us a glowing picture of the "happy period of free intercourse" between the European and the Indian when "not only the military adventurers who unreservedly adopted Indian manners and customs and style of living, but even the ordinary English merchants and administrators, imitated with varying degrees of success Indian habits and practices." The reader should go over this chapter carefully and ask himself if he would really like this "happy period" back. We confess we have no use for these eighteenth century Nabobs with their native harems and their gorgeous oriental entourage.

It might be urged that the ultra-modern oriental who has discarded his own coat and struts about in plumage borrowed from the West is equally incongruous. No doubt he is: East and West seldom meet with very happy results.

The author in his preface says that his "fundamental aim is not to establish the principle of racial equality in the abstract ; but to plead for a spirit of greater charity and reasonableness in the racial outlook."

This is remarkable moderation. But it is not likely that the virile and masterful Briton will feel any real respect for a people who "plead for a spirit of greater charity." We are sure the learned author understands this quite as well as we do. Possibly he wants to be politic and tactful.

The Briton, we are afraid, does not understand tact. Why not assert absolute racial equality ? Why not tell the Briton that he is, as

the ruler of this land, entitled to our homage. Let him have it to the full. But what is the use of pretending that we consider him to belong to a race superior to our own !

The British Empire in India is a remarkable achievement. But it has not yet lasted more than 150 years. It is difficult for the Indian to forget that for five thousand years prior to the coming of the European, his people, Dravidian and Aryan, Pathan and Moghul, had founded vast and mighty empires in this country ; that their contribution to the world's culture was no less than that of any nation on the face of the earth. We have fallen on evil days. It does not behove us to talk too glibly of our past history. But it is permissible to assert that the blood that flows through our veins is as noble as anybody else's.

In referring above to a passage from the preface we have called the author tactful and politic ; but unfortunately he has not been able to keep up this attitude throughout. Some of his remarks on pages 648, 649, 652 and 689 are by no means gentle, and look uncommonly like threats.

In fact, there is a great deal of strong language employed in the book. Macaulay, Vincent Smith and Katherine Mayo have been very severely dealt with. They may or may not deserve it ; but the use of words like ignorant, malicious, flippant, philistine, mountebank, charlatan, never helps one's cause, especially if conciliation is intended. The book would have been really valuable if there had been less of journalistic exuberance of language and more of a true scientific spirit.

The learned author's patience and industry are remarkable. The exhaustive bibliography at the end of the book clearly indicates that there are hardly any writings, books, journals and reports bearing on the subject that he has not studied assiduously. There are numerous quotations from these writings on almost every page. These quotations refer mainly to the Briton's iniquities in thought and action, but every British "friend of India" has had his meed of praise. The names of Edwin Arnold, William Jones, Thomas Munro, Elphinstone, Malcolm and even satraps like Warren Hastings and Shore have been cited with gratitude and respect over and over again.

Professor George's analysis of racial relations is thorough enough, but the book we are afraid lacks any synthetic and suggestive value. Its effect on the average Indian reader is likely to be undesirable.

When he has finished reading the book he will in all probability feel very little indeed against the Briton.

The British reader will wonder why all these old grievances against his forbears have been raked up. Whatever Lord Cornwallis may have said in the eighteenth century, Indians now occupy the very highest posts. Indian aspirations with regard to dining and dancing in the different Government Houses have been partially satisfied. Planters and Tommies do not go about knocking down natives all over the place as they used to do in the good old days. Racial relations are distinctly on the mend.

What has hurt the learned writer most seems to be the silent contempt of the Briton towards the Indian. We may be pardoned for reminding him that contempt is almost always well deserved. It can come to an end only when the object of contempt makes up his mind that it must end. The efficient looks down on the inefficient, the intelligent looks down on the unintelligent, the strong looks down on the weak. It is but human. Why feel bitter about it ! Why feel bitter at all now when the rosy light of the dawn has already appeared on the eastern horizon ?

Our own view is that today hatred has largely taken the place of the old-time contempt. Vested interests are threatened. Briton stands face to face with his would-be supplanter, angry and menacing. And angry and menacing his attitude will continue to be till certain vital questions between him and the subject race have been solved. That is a politicians' job. A mere student can express no opinion.

C. C. Dutt

Rajatarangini, or the Saga of the Kings of Kashmir.

Translated from the original Sanskrit of Kalhana with introduction, annotations, appendices, etc.

By Ranjit Sitaram Pandit, with a foreword by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Published by the Indian Press, Ltd., Allahabad, India.

Price: Rs. 18/- pp. I-XXXV and 1-645. 28 full page plates.

To say that translation cannot retain the beauty of the original is to reckon without Ranjit Sitaram Pandit, the latest translator into English of the *Rajatarangini*, the historical epic of Kashmir. Undoubtedly this beautifully and powerfully translated book is an outstanding book of the year.

This great saga of the kings of Kashmir, made out of elemental virtues and vices and spiced with incidents which never can fail to instruct as well as to entertain, has been the subject matter of translation since the days of Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir (1421-1472 A. D.). There is something enthralling about the book and once you begin to read this great epic you cannot give it up. This vast panorama of ancient life is essentially a human document and as such cannot but raise an echo in a human heart.

None of us can afford to be ignorant of the history of Kashmir. Strategically it is the key to India and historically it is the meeting point of its various cultures. Sir Aurel Stein's translation of Kalhana's work is essentially archaeological and topographical and by his own admission he does not deal with verses which, according to him, are in "Kavya style", and which "contain rhetoric descriptions or didactic matter of a wholly conventional type, practically unconnected with the narrative proper." But Kalhana who wrote his book in verse demands to be regarded as a poet first and then as a historian. To him poetry was not only the speech of which the soul was 'rasa' but also the art of life. While dealing with dissolute Kings and deep-dyed villains, he does not forget the glory of sunrise or the dying glow of sunset. While he paints a picture which is violent and filled with a teeming and hideous chiaroscuro, he does not forget the entrancing natural aspects of Kashmir which to him always is a land of consistent loveliness, with pretty girls who make life attractive and gallant gentlemen who make life worth living.

Kalhana revels in characterizations,—even occasionally at the expense of historical fidelity. He does not view his subject calmly, coolly and dispassionately. He loves his people too much to do it. Indeed, he seems to be a part of whatever he writes. A political observer of great shrewdness, he watches and studies the political machinery from the inside. He knows that it is made up of cogs, belts, gears and wheels within wheels, and that these behave with a certain habitual regard for the laws of physics and mechanics.

Pandit Jawaharlal in his foreword says : "It is a story of mediaeval times and often enough is not a pleasant story. There is too much palace intrigue and murder and treason and civil war and tyranny. It is the story of autocracy and military oligarchy here as in Byzantium or elsewhere." But Panditji pauses there, and a little after remarks : "Sometimes we get intimate glimpses of human relations and human feelings, of love and hatred, of faith and passion. We read of Suyya's

great engineering feats and irrigation works ; of Lalitaditya's distant wars of conquest in far countries ; of Meghavahana's curious attempt to spread non-violence also by conquest ; of the building of temples and monasteries and their destruction by non-believers and iconoclasts who confiscated the temple treasures. And there were famines and floods and great fires which decimated the population and reduced the survivors to misery." The book is thus a polychrome, the author using the colours suitably and calmly.

Kalhana wrote his book about 1148 to 1150 A. D. and since those days there have been critics who have variously charged him with credulity to miraculous stories and legends, want of critical estimate as to his source, silence as to specific authority, gradual effacement of historical details, inability to distinguish heroic legends from history, want of perception of historical changes, lack of critical judgment in dealing with chronology, liability to fall into errors of Kashmirian superstition and want of proper knowledge of the outside world and an exaggerated opinion of the importance of his country.

But in judging a writer we must not forget the time and the country to which he belonged.

Finally let us add that the present translation is a valuable addition to the scanty historical literature of India. The merit of Mr. Ranjit Sitaram Pandit's achievement becomes all the greater when we remember that the work was carried out during his period of political incarceration. He has devoted himself to his subject with a thoroughness which does credit to his patience. The book contains learned annotations and appendices and illuminating plates which display the masterly grasp of the subject by the translator.

Syama Charan Bhattacharyya

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Where the mind is without fear
and the head is held high,
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken
up into fragments by narrow domestic
walls;
Where words come out from the
depth of truth;
Where tireless striving
stretches its arms towards
perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward
by thee into ever-widening
thought and action —
into that heaven of freedom,
my Father,
let my country awake.

Rabindranath Tagore

Santiniketan



By Rabindranath Tagore

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UNIVERSAL LITERATURE *

Rabindranath Tagore

ALL our faculties are for establishing relations with the rest of the universe, by which relations we become true, whereby we apprehend truth, and without which our separate existence and the separate existence of other things would have had no significance. Such relations are three-fold: of knowledge, of need, of joy.

The relation of knowledge may be called an adverse relation like that of a hunter with his quarry. Our intellect puts truth into the witness box and elicits its story, bit by bit, by cross examination. Wherefore it takes pride in its knowledge, for to the extent that the intellect knows, it feels its own power.

Then comes the relation of need, a practical relation that involves co-operation, with which it brings truth nearer to us. And yet a distance is left. Whenever we make truth serve any of our needs, we feel we have gained the mastery; we regard nature as our slave, and her forces as our servants.

Lastly, there is the relation of beauty, of joy, where all separate-ness disappears, no feeling of pride remains, and there is nothing in the way of our intimacy with the meanest, the weakest thing. The King of Mathura feels ashamed to flaunt his majesty before the milkmaid whom he loves. Here we feel not power, either of our intellect or of

* Read before the National Council of Education. Translated from the original Bengali by Surendranath Tagore.

our will, but only consciousness of ourselves in truth, with no veil, nothing ulterior, in between.

In short, the relation of knowledge is our school, the relation of need our office, the relation of joy our home. We are not all the time at school, we do not wholly belong to our office, it is only in our home that we gain the relief of full self-surrender. So our school is bare, our office undecorated, but profuse are the ornaments we lavish on our home.

What, then, is this relation of joy ? It is the knowing of oneself as another, of another as oneself. When we know in this way, no further question arises. We never ask why we love ourselves ; the very consciousness of self is a joy. When we are similarly conscious of another, we have likewise no reason to ask why we love.

As the sage Yajnavalkya told his wife, Maitreyi, the son is dear, not because we desire a son, but because we desire our own self. Possessions are dear, not because we want them, but because we want our self. His meaning was that our desire is for such things as enable us to arrive at a deeper or larger consciousness of ourselves. In my son I realise an extension of my own personality, I see in him objectively that which makes me love myself, in him I feel more myself, and so call him my own, and love him more than myself. And, in general, in order to know a man, one has to know what things he loves, for that indicates how far he has extended himself in the universe, how deeply he has realised himself. Where we do not love, we come up against the boundary which limits our individuality.

The infant smiles and babbles when it sees light or something in motion, for that makes it more conscious of itself, and thus gives it pleasure. When its consciousness comes to extend beyond merely receiving sense impressions to knowing and feeling, the former no longer give it the same delight, though that is never altogether lost. And as man continues to grow he longs to realise more and more the truth of his own being.

This extension of man's being outside itself is first and more easily, and finally most completely, effected in another human being, through sight and sound, thought and imagination, and in all the varied relations of affection. That is why man's life brims over with fulfilment in knowing, loving and working for other men. Whence, he who has realised his unity with the largest number of his fellow-men in space and time, is called a great man, a Mahatma.

In the way of such self-extension, one obstacle is self-interest,

egoism is another. These obstacles impede and break up the outward flow of man's being, and stand in the way of his obtaining a clear view of the beauty of humanity.

I know there are objectors who will argue that if such extension of self be of the essence of humanity, why do we see so little of it in the world? What I have called obstacles,—self-interest, egoism,—it is rather these that should be looked upon as primarily natural to man. As a matter of fact, many do so call them, for the obstructions are more obvious than the nature they obscure. When a man starts learning to ride a bicycle, it may appear to some innocent onlooker that he is practising to fall, rather than to ride! We doubtless see at every step in this world of ours the workings of man's self-interest and egoism, but if, through all these, we do not also see his persistent endeavour to extend his relations with all, then we shall be like that same innocent.

In point of fact, it becomes necessary to place obstructions in the way of our nature in order to know it better, to make it function more fully. He who thereupon becomes more largely conscious, also gains the deeper joy. This applies to all our relations with truth.

Take the case of our intellect. One of its functions is to discover and define relations of cause and effect. While the intellect is merely doing so in regard to things that are immediately present, it is not fully conscious of itself. But when it has to work hard for bringing to light that which is hidden, the intellect reveals its own greater powers in science and philosophy, and every success so achieved adds to its glory.

What, after all, is science or philosophy but the extension of man's intellect into the outside world? There it finds the workings of its own laws, and realises its one-ness with it. That is what is called understanding. In that the intellect has its satisfaction. Else what makes man so glad to know that the same force which makes the apple fall to the ground also keeps the suns and planets in their courses? What is that to him, unless it means this for him that, from specks of dust to the heavenly bodies, everything is comprised in his intellect. The mystery of the whole universe draws into itself the mind of man and thereupon makes it more manifest, returning it to him enlarged after union with itself. This union with the all, is wisdom. This is what gives us intellectual joy.

In the same way, the pursuit of one's own union with other human beings is a natural function of the human soul, which gives it spiritual satisfaction. For its fullest realisation, man's soul has to

pass through and overcome obstacles. That is why self-interest is so powerful, egoism so unshakeable, the way of the world so difficult. When all difficulties have been overpassed and the true nature of man is revealed in all its beauty, then is his being flooded with joy. Then is he aware of his own greatness.

That is what makes us delight in reading the lives of great men. In their characters we but see our own, — freed from its vagueness, its impediments,—in the vastness of its expanse. In history we rejoice in the spectacle of our nature struggling through the vicissitudes of others' lives, during the several stages of its development. Always in such cases there is the underlying truth, whether fully present to our consciousness or not, that each one of us is one with the others. To the extent that I, the individual, realise this, it is good for me, joyful for me.

But neither in biography nor in history are we able to get a clear vision of the whole, so thick is the mist of anomalies and inconsistencies. Therefore, though the panorama of man passes before us, there is left unfulfilled within us the desire to make it our own. My love for what I behold must find adequate expression embellished by beautiful language, so that it may secure permanent place in my heart, and not drift away on the current of the fleeting world.

Thus does every external phenomenon,—be it the splendour of sunrise, the brilliance of a great character, some deeply felt emotion, anything that appears to us admirable because it stirs us into an unusual intensity of consciousness,—make our heart desire to capture it for itself by force of its own creative activity, for the purpose of greater self-manifestation.

The process of man's self-expression is carried on chiefly in two streams, the one of his works, the other of his literature. These streams, into which man pours out himself, flow along side by side, supplementing and fulfilling each other. Man can only be completely known in the history of both.

In the field of works the body and mind of man are busy building up for him his dwelling places, his communities, his kingdoms and his religions. In these are expressed all that he has known, all that he has gained, all that he desires. Working in combination with nature these have made him what he is in all his variety. That which was dimly perceivable as idea has taken bodily shape in reality. That which was feeble in the individual, functions more strongly in the mass.

It has now come to pass that individual man can no longer attain

his full development apart from the habitations, the social groups, the national organisations, the religious beliefs of the many. All these go to form the larger body in which man becomes manifest to man. Without these there cannot be what we call civilisation. For which reason any blow to the civilised body-politic is felt as a blow by each of its members ; any narrowness in the former stands in the way of the full development of the latter ; the manifestation of man, and his own joy therein, being the very object of the larger formation.

Nevertheless, in the field of man's work, self-expression is incidental, not his primary concern. While the lady of the house cannot but express herself in her housewifely duties, that is not what she works for ; her personality merely happens to be revealed as a reflection of her various activities.

There are, however, other connections in which man's desire for self-expression becomes predominant. For instance, on the occasion of a wedding, the preparations for the ceremony are, on the one hand, carried on ; and, on the other, the emotion of the householder proclaims itself in music, light and decorations. His heart overflows in a cascade of beauty in its desire to communicate its joy to others. Then again, maternal instinct impels the mother to rear her child, but that alone does not satisfy her heart. Her love further seeks various superfluous expressions in playful caresses and endearing prattle ; the superabundance of her emotion seeks outlet in bedecking her child with dress and ornament in excess of its need.

All this brings out the characteristic of man's heart. It is not sufficient unto itself. It wants to spread its emotions over the outside world. It can fulfil itself only by somehow or other making true without, what it feels as true within. Its dwelling house is not for it merely a structure of brick and wood, but it wants to make of it a home by tingeing it with its own colour. The country in which it lives is not for it only a particular combination of earth, water and sky ; it cannot rejoice therein unless it regards it as the Motherland, an embodiment of God's grace. Unless it so expands, the heart remains apathetic, and for it apathy means death.

So the one endeavour of the heart is how to become as true without as within. Its constant longing is to give objective reality to its emotions in the world outside. When the man of riches feels opulent, he may exhaust all his wealth in his anxiety to display it. When the lover realises his love, he becomes willing, in some supreme moment, to sacrifice his all, even life itself, in order to make it true in

the world. Always there is the desire in the heart to establish itself in the All.

There is a line of the Vaishnava poet, Balaramdas:

Who brought you out from within my own being ?

That is to say, the beloved belongs to the heart itself, and its yearning is to get back its own. There is also the opposite endeavour : when it fails to find outside that which is within, the heart seeks to make an outward image of what it feels with the aid of all kinds of devices. Thus goes on the play of making the world one's own and expanding oneself in the world, for the sake of which man is willing to give up all else.

When the counterpart of the same endeavour appears to be made by the outside world, to enter into relations with man by means of beauty, his heart responds at once, and surrenders unquestioningly.

We see, for instance, that the flower is in no haste to transform itself into seed, but continues to bloom in beauty beyond biological necessity. The cloud does not hurriedly finish with its showering, thereupon to take its leave, but lingers on to regale our eyes with colour following colour in needless profusion. The trees do not, like beggars, solicit sunshine and rain with withered limbs outstretched, but offer worship to the guardian spirits of the four quarters with tier upon tier of gay greenery. The sea is not merely a huge moisture-distributing machine, but rolls before man the terribleness of its azure depths. The mountain is not content to perform its duty of returning to the earth the captured waters of the sky, but presides in the silent majesty of its lofty meditation over the plains below.

Age-old intellect questions: why all this useless extravagance of display ? Ever-youthful heart replies: 'Tis but to win my love. I see no other reason. For only the heart of man can realise that there is a heart in the universe, and both seek expression in mutual communion.

Had there not been this counterpart of our own emotions in the world outside us, we should have felt small indeed, ignored and left uninvited to the world festival. But no, the universe in the midst of its endless work goes out of its way to give us the glad tidings,—in joy and in sorrow, in fear and in assurance, in despair and in peace, in every kind of way,—that it stands in need of winning our heart.

The two aspects of work and emotion are thus to be found in the universe. Its working we cannot see fully, nor is our intellect

competent to grasp the whole of it. But its aspect that appeals to our emotions is immediately open to us. What is beautiful is lovely, what is grand is admirable, what is terrible is awe-inspiring. Their entry into our heart, their attraction for our heart, is direct. There may be an intermediate play of hide-and-seek, of consequent delays in consummation, but there is nothing in it beyond expression on either side, followed by mutual communion. The wisdom of God is seen in the working of the universe, His love in the joy that permeates it. It is difficult to discover God in its working, but not so when participating in its joy, for that is of His essence.

This is also true in the world of man. Here, likewise, intellect works and joy wells up. The former makes for self-preservation, the latter for self-expression. The one is necessary, the other beyond necessity. Necessity obstructs expression, expression overlooks necessity. Self-interest is parsimonious, in profusion is joy revealed. So, in the field of business the less of ourselves we express the better; while the farther we keep self-interest from our mind, the more splendid is our festival.

Now, in literature, these obstacles in the way of man's self-expression, of which I spoke, do not obtrude themselves. Here self-interest is at a safe distance. Grief casts a mist of tears over our hearts, but does not wound our lives. Fear agitates our hearts, but does not harm our bodies. Pleasure titillates our hearts, but does not make us beside ourselves by rousing our desires too strongly. And so, as I was saying, we create side by side with our work-a-day world, a world of literature where necessity does not rule us; where without detriment to our practical life, we can enjoy the play of all our emotions.

What then is revealed through literature? It is our wealth, our plenitude, that part of our being which overflows in excess of our actual needs, which has not been exhausted in the process of practical life. In such excess is humanity truly expressed. That man hungers is true, but that he is brave is still more true. The superman, the ideal towards which man is progressing, is being evolved by his literature, and such permanent ideal is being accumulated therein as a guide for each succeeding generation. In judging of any literary work by the test of such ideal, we avail ourselves of the judgement of all humanity.

But all men are not reliable judges, all nations are not worthy, and now and then come periods of depression that specially tend to

make man small. In the mirror, thus distorted, the petty are sometimes seen as great and so exalted in the literature of the time, which may likewise be led to boast of defects as merits. In such circumstances, artifice takes the place of art, vanity of glory. But Time with his strainer is always there, sifting out the petty and the unworthy, to be swept away with the dust, retaining for permanent literature only such wealth as holds good for all places and times, which all men may recognise as belonging to themselves.

This brings me to the subject on which you asked me to speak,—what you have referred to as Comparative Literature, but what I prefer to call Universal Literature.

To view literature as belonging to a particular person, place or time, is not to see it truly. What literature has to give us can only be properly apprehended when we realise that through it humanity of all time is seeking expression. Only the works of such authors as have felt within themselves the sentiments of all mankind, have found permanent place in literature ; and its several makers belonging to different countries and epochs are but the workmen who have assembled to carry out a given design. True, the whole plan is never before any one of them, so that mistakes have ever and anon to be rectified by dismantling and rebuilding. But because such workers are possessed of the requisite imagination and skill to work on the unseen design in harmonious collaboration, they are recognised as craftsmen of a superior order and honoured accordingly.

When in the field of the world's work we try to find what man's message is, what his endeavour has been, what aim he is pursuing, we have to make our search in his history as a whole,—to view separately the reign of Akbar, or the annals of Guzrath, or the character of Queen Elizabeth, may serve only to allay our curiosity for historical news. He who knows that Akbar and Elizabeth were but instruments ; that the deep purpose running through all history works towards fruition through the successes and failures of man ; that mankind strives to become greater and greater by all kinds of union between its units—such a reviewer does not single out for comment any particular individual, however prominent, but seeks to discover and show how humanity is making and breaking, breaking and making, in order to achieve unity from disparity, to realise itself as a whole. Such a spectator is not content with looking at the throng of pilgrims, but returns not till he has had his own sight of the shrine.

So in the field of what I call universal literature, the thing to be

seen is, how man is there giving expression to the joy which is at the source of his being ; in what aspect,—whether as sinner, enjoyer, or self-conqueror,—he, in different moods and circumstances, essays to hold himself forth ; how through all such aspects and variations his soul is ever striving to know its own significance.

In short, one should traverse universal literature for the purpose of knowing how truly man has so far succeeded in establishing intimate relations with the world at large, or what is the same thing, how far he has achieved intimacy with Truth itself. For literature must not be viewed as an artificial product, but as a real world in itself whose whole truth is not revealed to any one individual, because it is ever, like the world of man's work, in the process of being created ; but which, nevertheless, even in its incomplete stage, holds within itself the ideal of perfection towards which it is progressing.

We cannot see the tensely-fluid core within the sun, which is in constant process of transformation, but which nevertheless is being manifested to us by its photosphere, through whose luminous activity the sun is continually giving itself up and uniting itself with all the universe. If we could similarly have had a vision of humanity in its wholeness, we should have seen its inner core at work adjusting itself into different layers ; and surrounding it a radiant periphery spreading its influence further and further. I ask you to look on universal literature as such a photosphere of humanity in which at times storms arise, sprays are thrown up, and light contends with light.

Whilst you wander amidst the habitations of men, you see them at their incessant toil,—the grocer tending his shop, the smith plying his hammer, the porter bearing his load, the business man balancing his books ; but you perhaps overlook one thing which I would now bring before your mind, that in his homes, workshops and markets, in the highways and byways of his daily work, through all their squalor, narrowness and penury, there flows an ever-increasing volume of rich emotional life.

In the Ramayana and Mahabharata, in innumerable folk-tales, ballads and devotional songs, is distributed to each and all, by day and by night, the nectar welling up in the heart of humanity. Behind the meanest countrymen of ours stand the heroic figures of Rama and Lakshmana, through the dingiest of his dwellings flow the heart-stirring breezes of their forest retreat ; his rainy season has been amplified and made more beautiful in the rains perpetuated in our poems and songs, in Kalidasa's *Meghaduta*, in Vidyapati's lyrics ;

the petty joys and sorrows of his meagre home are presented to him in larger perspective in the joys and sorrows of royal dynasties told in drama and epic ; his heart's yearnings for his little daughter are annually celebrated in the eternal story of Uma's separation from and reunion with her father, the Mountain King ; the creations, the radiations of man's heart mitigate, with the embrace of their soft, bejewelled arms, the hardness and poverty of man's work-a-day world.

I ask you thus to see universal literature as enveloping all mankind with a halo of beauty and virtue. You must see how his physical life has thus expanded into its surrounding spiritual life,—the larger world that literature has created round his smaller world of actuality.

Please do not expect me to be your guide through this world of universal literature. Each of us must, according to his capacity, cut out his own path through its difficulties. All I want to tell you is, that just as the world of work is not your field alone, or my field, or another's field,—a view that would be utterly rustic,—so also literature is not your work, or my work, or the work of any other individual, according to the commonly prevalent idea.

Let us avoid such narrowness of outlook and fasten our gaze on the working of humanity in universal literature. The time has come when it must be our quest to discover in the work of each its relation to the whole, its part in the vast endeavour for self-expression in which all humanity is engaged.



NIRUKTA=HERMENEIA

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

EVERY student of Vedic literature will be familiar with what are called by modern scholars "folk-etymologies". I cite for example *Chāndogya Up.*, VIII. 3.3, "Verily, this Spirit is in the heart¹ (*eṣa ātmā hṛdi*). The hermeneia (*niruktam*) thereof is this: 'This is in the heart' (*hṛdayam*), and that is why the 'heart' is called '*hṛdayam*'. Whoever is a comprehensor of this reaches Heaven every day." Specimens, of course, abound in Yāska, for example *Nirukta*, V. 14, "*Puṣkaram* means 'mid-world', because it 'fosters' (*poṣati*) things that come to be.² Water is *puṣkaram* too, because it is a 'means of worship' (*pūjākaram*), and 'to be worshipped' (*pūjayitavyam*). Otherwise, as 'lotus' (*puṣkaram*) the word is of the same origin, being a 'means of adorning' (*vaṇṇaṣkaram*); and it is a 'bloom' (*puṣyam*) because it 'blossoms' (*puṣpate*). Explanations of this kind are commonly dismissed as "etymological triflings" (Eggeling), "purely artificial" (Keith), and "very fanciful" (Mazumdar), or as "puns". On the other hand, one feels that they cannot be altogether ignored, for as the last mentioned author says in *Indian Culture* II. 378, "There are in many Upaniṣads very fanciful explanations . . . disclosing bad grammar and worse idiom, and yet the grammarians who did not accept them as correct, did not say anything about them": that is to say, the early Sanskrit grammarians, whose "scientific" abilities have been universally recognized, did not embody these "explanations" in their "grammar", but at the same time never condemned them.

Nirukta is not in fact a part of philology in the modern sense ; a hermeneutic explanation may or may not coincide with the actual pedigree of a word in question. *Nirukta*=hermeneia is founded upon a theory of language of which philology and grammar are only departments, one may even say the most humble departments, nor do I say this without a real and genuine respect for those "omniscient impeccable leviathans of science that headlong sound the linguistic ocean to its most horrid depths, and (in the intervals of ramming each other) ply their flukes on such

¹ I.e. "within you", in the sense that "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you."

² The space between Heaven and Earth, being and not-being, light and darkness, essence and nature, being precisely the locus, opportunity, and "promised land" of all birth and becoming.

audacious small fry as even on the mere surface will venture within their own danger",³ and whose advices in matters of verbal genealogy I am always ready to accept. Etymology, an excellent thing in its place, is nevertheless precisely one of those "modern sciences which really represent, quite literally 'residues' of the old sciences, no longer understood."⁴ In India, the traditional science of language is the special domain of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, of which the characteristic is that "It lays stress on the proposition that articulate sounds are eternal,⁵ and on the consequent doctrine that the connection of a word with its sense is not due to convention, but is by nature inherent in the word itself". When however Professor Macdonell (*Sanskrit Literature*, 1905, p. 400) adds to this excellent characterisation that "Owing to its lack of philosophical interest, the system has not as yet much occupied the attention of European scholars", he only means that the subject is not of interest to himself and his kind ; it is implausible that he should have had in mind deliberately to exclude Plato from the category of "philosophers". For not only does Plato employ the hermeneutic method, in the *Cratylus*, for example when he says "'To have called' (*tò kalésan*) things useful is one and the same thing as to speak of 'the beautiful' (*tò kalòn*)", but throughout this dialogue is dealing with the problem of the nature of the relation between sounds and meanings, enquiring whether this is an essential or an accidental one. The general conclusion is that the true name of anything is that which has a natural (Skr. *sahaja*) meaning, i.e. is really an "imitation" (*mimesis*) of the thing itself in terms of sound, just as in painting things are "imitated" in terms of colour ; but that because of the actual imperfection of vocal imitation, which may be thought of as a matter of inadequate recollection, the formation of words in use has been helped out by art and their meaning partly determined by convention. What is meant by natural meaning can be understood when we find that Socrates and Cratylus are represented as agreeing that "the letter *rho* (Skr. *ṛ*, *r*) is expressive of rapidity, motion, and hardness". Cratylus maintains that "he who knows the names knows also the things expressed by them" and this is as much as to imply that "He who first

³ Standish Hayes O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, 1892, II, v.

⁴ René Guénon, *La Crise du Monde Moderne*, 1927, p. 103.

⁵ What is meant by the "eternity of the Veda" is sometimes misunderstood. "Eternal" is "without duration", "not in time" (*akāla*), therefore ever present. The "eternity" of tradition has nothing to do with the "dating" of a given scripture, in a literary sense. As St. Thomas expressed it, "Both the Divine Word and the writing of the Book of Life are eternal. But the promulgation cannot be from eternity on the part of the creature that hears or reads" (*Summa*, I-II, 91.1 ad 2).

gave names to things did so with sure knowledge of the nature of the things ; he maintains in so many words that this first giver of names (Skr. *nāmadhāḥ*) must have been "a power more than human," and that the names thus given in the beginning are necessarily their "true names". The names themselves are dualistic, implying either motion or rest, and are thus descriptive of acts, rather than of the things that act ; Socrates admits that the discovery of real existence, apart from denotations, may be "beyond you and me".

It is likewise the Indian doctrine (*Bṛhaddevatā*, I. 27 f., *Nirukta*, I, 1 and 12, etc.) that "Names are all derived from actions": insofar as they denote a course of action, names are verbs, and insofar as someone or something is taken to be the doer of the action, they are nouns. It must not be overlooked that Skr. *nāma* is not merely "name", but "form", "idea", and "eternal reason".⁶ Sound and meaning (*śabdārtha*) are inseparably associated, so that we find this expression employed as an image of a perfect union, such as that of Śiva-śakti, essence and nature, act and potentiality *in divinis*. Names are the cause of existence ; one may say that in any composite essence (*sattva*, *nāmarūpa*), the "name" (*nāma*) is the form of the "phenomenon" (*rūpa*) in the same sense that one says that "The soul is the form of the body". In the state of non-being (*asat*) or darkness (*tamas*) the names of individual principles are unuttered or "hidden" (*nāmāni guhyā*, *apīcyā*, etc., RV. *passim*)⁷ ; to be named is to proceed from death to life. The Eternal Avatar himself, proceeding as a child (*kumāra*) from the unkindly Father, demands a name, because it is "by name that one strikes away evil" (*phāpmānam āpahanti*, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VI. 1. 3. 9) ; all beings on their way dread most of all to be robbed of their names by the powers of Death, who lies in wait to thief (*krivir nāmāni pravaṇe muṣayati*, RV. V. 44. 4). "It is by his deathless name (*amartyena nāmnā*) that Indra overliveth human generations" (RV. VI. 18. 7). So long as an individual principle remains in act, it has a name ; the world of "names" is the world of "life" : "When a man dies, what does not go out of him is 'name', that is 'without end', and since what is 'without end' is the Several Angels, thereby he wins the 'world without end' " (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Uṇ.*, III. 2. 12).

It is by the enunciation of names that a "more than human power", not merely designates existing things correctly, but endows them with

⁶ See my "Vedic Exemplarism", *James Haughton Woods Memorial Volume*, 1936.

⁷ "When names were not, nor any sign of existence endowed with name" (Rūmī, XVII, in Nicholson, *Diwān-i-Shams-i-Tabrīz*).

their being, and that the All-maker can do this is because he is omniscient of the hidden or titanic names of things that are not yet in themselves ; it is by the foreknown names of mediate causes he does all that must be done, including the creation of all separated beings. For example, RV. I. 155. 6 "He by the names of the Four (Seasons) has set in motion the rounded wheel (of the Year) that is furnished with ninety steeds" ; X. 54. 4 "Thy titan names, all these, O Maghavan, thou surely knowest, whereby thou hast performed thy mighty deeds" ; VIII. 41. 5 "Varuṇa knoweth the hidden names remote, many a locution maketh he to blossom (*kāvyā purū . . . puṣyati*), even as the light of heaven (*dyauh*, here the Sun, *pūṣan*, *savitṛ*, as in V. 81. 2) bringeth into blossom all kind" (*puṣyati . . . rūpam*). It is by the same token that all words of power are efficacious ; for example *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, VI. 9. 5 and 10. 3 "By the word 'born' (*jātam*) he 'brings to birth' (*jījanat*) . . . In saying 'lives' he enlivens them that 'live' "

It is thus by a divine providence that all things are brought forth in their variety : "Varuṇa knows all things speculatively" (*viśvaṃ sa veda varuṇo yathā dhiyā*, X. 11. 1). "All-maker, supernal seer-at-one-glance (*saṃdṛk*), of whom they speak as 'One beyond the Seven Prophets', who is the only one Denominator of the Angels (*yo devānāṃ nāmadhā eka eva*), to him all other beings turn for information" (*sampraśnam*) X. 82, 2-3⁸ should be read in connection with I. 72. 3 where the Angels, by their sacrificial service, "obtained their names of worship, contrived their high-born bodies" ; to be named, to get a name, in other words is to be born, to be alive. This denominative creation is a dual act : on the part of the One Denominator, the utterance is as single as himself, on the part of the individual principles, this single meaning that is pregnant with all meanings is verbally divided, "by their wordings they conceived him manifold who is but One (X. 114. 5). And inasmuch as such a sacrificial partition is a contraction and identification into variety, it must be realised that to be named, while it is indispensable to way-faring, is not the goal : "Speech (*vāc*) is the rope, and names the knot whereby all things are bound" (*Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, II, 1. 6), the end

⁸ It is quite right for us to think of "names as the *consequences* of things" (Aristotle, as quoted by Dante in the *Vita Nuova*), because our knowledge of things is not essential, but accidental ; aspiring to essential knowledge, names are for us a means to knowledge, and not to be confused with knowledge itself. But let us not forget that from the point of view of the Creator, Plato's "more than human power" which was the First Denominator, names (ideas) *preceded* things, which He *knew* before they *were*. Already possessed of essential knowledge, for Him to *name* is the same as to *create* ; from the point of view of the First mind, "things are the consequences of names".

is formally the same as the beginning, it is as one "no longer fed by form or aspect (*nāmarūpād-vibhuktaḥ*) that the Comprehensor reaches the heavenly Person beyond the yon, knowing the Brahman becomes the Brahman" (*Muṇḍaka Up.*, III. 18-19), it is "Just as these flowing rivers tend towards the sea, their name and aspect are cluttered, it is only spoken of as 'sea'" (*Praśna Up.*, VI. 5), "the fastidious soul", as Eckhart says, "can rest on nothing that has name", "On merging into the Godhead all definition is lost", and this is also why he says, "Lord, my welfare lies in thy never calling me to mind", for all of which innumerable parallels could be cited from other Christian as well as from Śūfī and other Indian sources.

One thus begins to glimpse a theory of expression in which ideation, denomination, and individual existence are inseparable aspects, conceptually distinguishable when objectively considered, but coincident in the subject. What this amounts to is the conception of a single living language, not knowable in its entirety by any individual principle, but in itself the sum of all imaginable articulations, and in the same way corresponding to all imaginable acts of being: the "Spoken Word" of God is precisely this "sum of all language" (*vācikaṁ sarvañmayam*, *Abhinaya Darpaṇam*, 1). All existing languages are partially remembered and more or less fragmented echoes of this universal tongue, just as all modes of vision are more or less obscure refractions of the world-picture (*jagac-citra*, *Svātmanirūpaṇa*, 95) or eternal mirror (*speculum eternum*, Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, XII. 29); which if one knew and saw in their entirety and simultaneity would be to be omniscient. The original and inexhaustible (*akṣara*) affirmation (*om*), is pregnant with all possible meaning, or thought of not as sound but as "omniform light" (*jyotir-viśvarūpam*, *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, V. 35), is the exemplary form of very different things, and either way is precisely "that one thing by which when it is known, all things are known" (*Muṇḍaka Up.*, I. 3, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* I. 4, 5). The paternal comprehension and the mother-tongue which are thus in their identity the first principle of knowledge, are evidently inaccessible to empirical observation:⁹ so long as an individual conscious-

⁹ And thus, as a modern scholar would say, "meaningless to us and should not be described as knowledge" (Keith, *Āitareya Āraṇyaka*, 1909, p. 42); where however it should be borne in mind that the kind of knowledge intended corresponds to Skr. *avidyā*, as being a relative knowledge or opinion, as distinguished from an ascertainment. It is not, as Macdonell pretends, because the theory of an adequate symbolism of sound is devoid of philosophical (or rather, metaphysical) interest, but because the modern scholar is not interested in principles, but only in "facts", not in truth, but only in statistical prediction, that "the (*Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*)

ness can be distinguished as such, an omniscience is inconceivable, and one can only "turn to the One Denominator for instruction" (RV. X. 82. 3), viz., to Plato's "more than human power", to recover lost potentialities by acts of recollection, raising our level of reference by all available dispositive means. The metaphysical doctrine of universal language is thus by no means to be thought of as asserting that a universal language was ever actually spoken by any people under the sun ; the metaphysical concept of a universal speech is in fact the conception of a single sound, not that of groups of sounds to be uttered in succession, which is what we mean when we speak of "a spoken language" ; where in default of an a priori knowledge of the thought to be expressed, it may be "difficult to tell whether it is the thought which is defective or the language which has failed to express it" (Keith, *loc. cit.*, p. 54).

The assumption more immediately underlying the traditional science of hermeneutics (*nirukta*) is that there remains in spoken languages a trace of universality, and particularly of natural *mimesis* (by which, of course, we do not mean a merely onomatopoeic likeness, but one of true analogy) ; that even in languages considerably modified by art and by convention, there still survives a considerable part of a naturally adequate symbolism. It is assumed, in other words, that certain assonances, which may or may not correspond to the actual pedigrees of words, are nevertheless indications of their affinities and meanings ; just as we recognize family likeness, both of appearance and of character, apart from the line of direct inheritance. All of which is anything but a matter of "folk-etymology" ; it is not a matter of etymology at all in the narrowest sense of the word, but rather of significant assonance ;¹⁰

system has not as yet much occupied the attention of European scholars". The same might be said with respect to any other traditional science.

All tradition proposes means dispositive to absolute experience. Whoever does not care to employ these means is in no position to deny that the proposed procedure can lead, as asserted, to a principle that is precisely *aniruktam* no thing and no where, at the same time that it is the source of all things everywhere. What is most repugnant to the nominalist is the fact that granted a possibility of absolute experience, no rational demonstration could be offered in a classroom, no "experimental control" is possible ; very much as *cogito ergo sum* is to every individual an adequate proof of his own conscious existence, of which however no demonstrative proof could be offered to the solipsist, because he cannot directly experience the consciousness of another who also claims to be a "person".

¹⁰ "For example, we do not mean to imply that as between the words *Agnus* and *Ignis* (Latin equivalent of *Agni*) there is anything more than one of those phonetic similarities to which we referred to above, which very likely do not correspond to a line of linguistic descent, but are not therefore to be regarded as purely accidental" (René Guénon, *L'Ésotérisme de Dante*, 1925, p. 92, Note 2).

and in any case the "folk" tradition is a matter of the "folk" only in respect of its transmission, not of its origin; "folk-lore" and *philosophia perennis* spring from a common source.

To neglect the *nirukta* is indeed to impose upon oneself a needless handicap in the exegesis of doctrinal content. Compare in this connection the more intelligent procedure of "Omikron": "A further decision led me constantly to consult such ancient lexika and fragments of lexika as were obtainable; for I believed that in these original dictionaries of the Hellenes, the ancient scholars would have given apposite meanings, as well as clues to symbolic and allegoric expression. I paid particular attention to the strange Hermēneia of the old grammarians, supposing that they had good reasons for it, and even for giving, usually, more than one Hermēneia for the same word".¹¹

From an empirical point of view it can hardly be claimed that the connection of sounds with meanings has been seriously investigated in modern times; we have the word of Macdonell, that "the system has not much occupied the attention of European scholars". Even if such investigations had been made, with indefinite or negative results, it would still hold that hermeneia (*nirukta*) as actually employed by ancient authors presents us with an invaluable aid to the understanding of what was actually intended and understood by the verbal symbols that are thus elucidated. The words of Scripture are for the most part highly technical, and pregnant with many meanings on various levels of reference, so that even the nominalist should feel himself indebted to the hermeneutist from a semantic point of view.

¹¹ Omikron, *Letters from Paulos*, London, 1920, Introduction.

VOICES

"I am sure" cried the little poems
"Our poet would like to know
That some of us come from the future
And some from the long ago ;
We are all forerunners of wisdom
And all you have got to do
Is to fill the being with twilight
And let us twinkle through !

"O poet ! what you call poems
Are so many ways and means
Of reaching the Virgin Whiteness
Behind the world's golds and greens,
Yea, they are attempts at storming
The subtle wonder that slips
Between the words you utter
From your song-enchanted lips.

"They sound the delicate heart-throbs
Of an ever-evasive One
Who reveals Himself in the silences
When all joy of singing is done ;
But you go on singing, my poet !
In faith, while the day is long,
You will find His light through your shadow,
You will touch His hush through your song."

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

NATURE AND MAN

Horace G. Alexandre

PERHAPS no age has been so conscious of nature or so much inclined to analyse the connection between the self-conscious mind of man and the environment of natural processes, as is our age. And perhaps it is especially in the industrialised West, where man has surrounded himself with stones and bricks, until he is cut off from all the environment of nature except the sky (and even that is often obscured by man-made smoke and fog) that man is driven most of all to ask himself: Can I live a sane life in this new environment I have made for myself ? Or does sanity demand a background of natural rhythm ?

In a book published recently, called "The Frustration of Science", one of the scientific authors declares that if science were given a free hand, if the world were organised rationally for the material advantage of all instead of irrationally for the wealth and amusement of a few and for the murder of the masses, we could all live in huge enclosed cities, where the climate could be regulated in different parts to suit all tastes, so that we could have just as much sunshine and warmth and rain or ice and snow and bracing winds, as we might wish for. I am all for spreading the material goods science has captured for us to the equal advantage of all ; I am all for stopping the frightful waste of wealth and energy on wars and war-preparations. I often wish the cold winds and rains of English winter-days would yield to summer sunshine. And yet

No : these strange cities that science could build would not satisfy every need of man. The days would come when every sane man and woman would say : Now we are going out for a holiday into the old world of nature, the world outside, back to the earth which first gave birth to life. Though we are men who can walk and run and drive cars and fly in aeroplanes, though we are not trees rooted in one spot, yet we have ancestral roots in the soil ; even our minds belong to the earth, and unless it is sometimes refreshed by contact with the earth, with the rhythm of the seasons, with the natural colours of soil and trees and sky, mind itself becomes restless, unbalanced, insane.

The Greeks knew that a sane mind must live in a healthy body. And a healthy body needs sometimes to yield itself up to the elements—

to sunlight and wind and water. So is the body cleansed and the mind is cleansed too.

But that is not all. As man has his roots in the earth, so too he has kinship with the animals. We of the West do not normally believe in the transmigration of souls : we have not been taught to believe that in past or future lives we are mice or deers or eagles or ants or sparrows or cobras. But our modern city life, which has almost cut us off from the wild creatures, has awakened us to our need of them. The countryman more often than not takes his fellow-creatures for granted. Some he will notice because they damage his crops ; some because they help him. But often he is callous and even cruel in his treatment of animals and birds.

It is not the countryman, except in rare instances, who wants to attract wild creatures to him. In western countries, at least, it is the townsman who has set the fashion of feeding wild-birds through the winter, of luring them into his little garden, even to the extent of leaving part of the garden uncultivated, to go "wild" and so be like a part of the wild. Some of the garden-birds of England have learnt that they need not leave the country for the winter, as their ancestors did. Man's activity, not all of it intentional, has changed their migratory habits in a space of fifty years. There must be thousands of Englishmen and women today who could not bear to live in a vast city of celluloid and asbestos, where not even the cheeky, untidy sparrow could penetrate. The sparrow must have saved thousands of Londoners from suicide and insanity. It is not only the idle rich whose sanity is saved by this new feeling for nature. In the most derelict districts of England you will find the children of unemployed workers scattering crumbs for birds in their back-yards. For myself, I would rather endure the draughts of many an English season than live in a scientifically perfected climate, where I should never see the return of the swallow nor hear the April cuckoo greeting the dawn, where the snowdrops and crocuses would not have to fight and overcome the natural elements.

Why is this ? I suppose it means that life is one, and that, just as no man can live to himself alone, so mankind cannot live for man only. As we pass from stage to stage in the evolution of the race, we need to find a fresh adjustment of human life to the life of the world around us. It cannot be the old adjustment. Man, the primitive hunter, with his panic fears, his fierce struggle to outwit the stronger and lither beasts, his intimacies and intuitions, had one kind of relation

to the world around him. Man as peasant, as farmer, as settled cultivator of the soil, turning some of the beasts, oxen, sheep, goats, fowls and ducks and others, to his own use, established a new relationship to the creatures. Civilised men, as we call ourselves, must find a new adjustment. It cannot be merely sentimental ; it will not be predominantly economic. It will necessarily be far more self-conscious than the earlier adjustments. Scientific enquiry will play a part in it ; for modern man must know—he must know in order to understand. Such knowledge must not be only museum knowledge, knowledge of structure and classification, of distribution and all the other external and material factors.

It must include an intimate knowledge of the minds of animals. Certain students of the behaviour of birds and animals, of reptiles and insects have recently published books that do not indeed get us very far ; but they show already how much light the behaviour of animals may throw on our own behaviour. Is the life of man intelligent and rational while the behaviour of all other animals is merely instinctive ? So said the dogmatic naturalists of fifty years ago. But instinct ? intelligence ? What are these words ? Who can draw the line between them ? Is not most of what we do, most of what the animals do—yes, perhaps even some aspects of plant life—a bewildering mixture of the two ; mixed in varying degree, no doubt, but the ultimate ingredients very much the same ?

True knowledge of the minds of animals can only grow from intimacy : and there is no relationship of intimacy without reverence. Civilized man can return again to a true harmony with nature—and perhaps, thereby, with his fellowman only if he unites knowledge and reverence.

“Let knowledge grow from more to more
And more of reverence in us dwell
That mind and soul according well
May make one music as before
But vaster.”

DIM SPECKS OF DUST

STRANGE, I should measure life's vast emptiness
Completely blind to all the cavalcade
Of sound and colour, blended in the mess
Of death and birth since man was first betrayed.
Here where leaf movements gladden pools unstirred
By rustling winds among Asoka trees,
Where silence wooes the breath of songful word
I'll ponder on man's quaint philosophies.

O nothingness, O void, we grace earth's sod,
Dim specks of dust forgotten by the throng
Of pilgrims to a vacant shrine, where God
Long grown a phantom schemed all human wrong,
Before the dawn when in His quiet ease
He brooded on the dark eternal seas.

E. H. d'Alvis

AN AMUSING CONFESSION

C. F. Andrews

THE middle of the hot weather had come in Madras. The heat was stifling and humid, weighing like a dull heavy load upon the mind. My new work had called me down from the Punjab to Madras. This meant that the sharp cold weather of the North had been suddenly left behind, and the long-drawn sultry heat of the South of India had taken its place. The change had gradually weakened the whole nervous system, and a low fever had increased the ill health from which I had been suffering for many weeks. At last the physical tension became so acute, that even the smallest incident became morbidly magnified, setting every nerve on edge. To endure things placidly had almost passed beyond my own control. The most significant symptom of all was a peculiar shrinking from any self-disclosure about what was happening within. It was a positive dread to me to say anything plainly to others about the mental worries from which I suffered so acutely. The inhibition had become almost complete.

The hope of obtaining some relief came at last. It was made possible for me to leave Madras and start for the Nilgiri Hills. An old friend had gone before and was already waiting for me at Kotagiri. We were to go out on a long walking tour together during which I hoped to recover health.

On the first day we halted quite early in the afternoon at a wayside bungalow and had our meal. Later on, I went out alone for a short stroll and met three Sadhus, not far from the bungalow, seated on some rising ground above the roadside basking in the sunshine. Just as I passed by, some familiar words in a Northern dialect struck my attention, and I turned back to find out from whence the Sadhus had come. It interested me greatly to find that they had wandered all the way from the Punjab. We talked on together for some time and then I passed on.

With the suddenness of the tropics, a storm which had been banking up in the distance burst upon the hill-side while we were seated in the bungalow having our late tea. The rain came down in a deluge ; but in a very short time the sun shone out again. We went out together after tea and found the three Sadhus with their bare bodies drenched to the skin, trying to light a fire. Some of the villagers from

below had brought them dry sticks and a large log of wood. They were shivering as they sat in the cold wind, while the fire was being prepared. It was quite chilly after the storm. They would probably sit close to the log fire all that night.

Up to that time my mind had been working quite normally while I had been engaged in the outdoor exercise of the day, and there had been a certain sense of exhilaration due to the colder climate of the Hills. But my undoing was soon to come over a pitifully insignificant concern. Up till now, I had been especially careful not to breathe a single word to my companion about the mischief of the mental worry and strain I had been through in the heat of Madras. But just at nightfall something upset me. It was so absurd that even now I hardly like to tell about it to ordinary sensible people.

Somewhat foolishly I had made up my mind to sleep in the verandah, in spite of the possible danger of another storm coming on during the night. There was not much risk, however, as my bed was on the protected side of the house, out of the wind. As we sat together in the evening, before retiring to rest, I casually mentioned that perhaps I might need an extra blanket. That casual word led to my own undoing. For just as I was taking a blanket from my companion I noticed that he had only one rug left for himself and this fact worried me. The moment that I saw he would be likely to be in need of it, I pleaded with him to keep the blanket for his own use. It was perfectly easy, I said, for me to do without it. Indeed, I had really too many rugs to cover me instead of too few. He refused with a very slight hesitation in his voice that I probably exaggerated. But when I pressed him to take it back, he would not allow me to return it. He said that he could get on quite easily without it, while I obviously needed it in the verandah where I might be quite cold in the night.

This led to a slight altercation, which set my mind more and more on edge. He was evidently a little annoyed at my apparent stupidity, while I was vexed by his obstinacy. I had kept myself steady all through the day, but now in an absurd manner the subconscious part of me took its revenge. Pictures began to rise up before my eyes of my companion in the early morning hours before dawn shivering with cold while I was lying cosy and warm outside. Soon I found myself becoming quite ridiculous in my special pleading with him to take back his blanket.

"What's wrong with you?" he said at last, "Why are you making all this fuss about nothing? If I really wanted the blanket I would keep it, but you are sure to need it far more than I am."

That brought my argument to an end. So I went into the verandah carrying the blanket with me.

But sleep proved quite impossible. The subconscious mind had now gained a complete mastery of its own. It was working within furiously from a centre quite independent of the conscious will. Though I laughed at myself for being a fool, I might just as well have laughed at the wind. When I appealed to my own common sense, the result was just the same.

One last effort I made to settle the matter and get rid of my fears. Creeping back in the dark, on tip-toe, I went to the room where my companion was sleeping, in order to lay the blanket over him quietly while he slept and then return. But some noise I made in the dark of that unfamiliar room awakened him. He asked me what I had come for and my explanation made him again impatient with me. This only increased my own misery and shame.

The shock of that misadventure in the dark somehow steadied me, and I managed to go to sleep ; for I was very tired and the mountain air had made me ready for slumber.

But in the middle of the night the cold crept through, and my feet began to freeze. I had refused to put on the bed the blanket which had annoyed us both. For there is a weakness of sheer stupidity, which rises out of nervous ill-health, and I had reached that stage of perverseness. Now, as the cold penetrated, I woke up from a restless dream with a start and remained wide awake, without any further chance of sleep.

All the fears of the earlier part of the night came back to me, and I began vividly to picture once more the condition of my companion, without his extra blanket, as much worse than my own. At last I could stand it no longer.

Again I tried the journey to his room through the dark,—not to awaken him,—God forbid !—but merely to find out whether he slept. The door was shut, and when I tried the latch, it was bolted from the inside. For sometime I listened, but there was only a dead silence. Nothing more could be done, except to get back to my own bed. But it was now impossible to sleep. By this time the moon had risen ; so I dressed, put on my shoes, and went out to see the Sadhus. They, at least, were unimpeded by problems of blankets. Their fire had become a mass of hot embers and I found them all fast asleep. There was no anxiety complex to worry them and keep them awake.

The moon was low on the horizon and the night air had become

more chill. So in the end I went back to bed. But morbid imaginations carried me back to that inner fastened room, where I fancied my friend shivering with cold for want of the blanket which he had insisted on giving me for the night. My own feet in bed, in spite of the socks I had on, became icily cold again and there was nothing more to be done except to lie awake till morning.

At dawn, I got up and went out along the road, stamping my feet to get warm. One of the Sadhus was kindling the dying embers of last night's fire into a flame. He told me in his own Northern dialect how cold it was and pointed to his naked limbs, which only a loin cloth protected. It was quite cheering for the moment to hear the sound of a human voice, and I felt a human affection for him: but when he began with a piteous mendicant's drawl to beg for alms, this pity evaporated. Hastily I gave him a few pice, for which he expressed no thanks. He had expected at least a rupee. But his bare body was obviously a part of his stock-in-trade, and he deserved no pity for it. When I came back from a short walk, I found him smearing his face with ashes and gazing at the effect of his self-decoration in a small looking glass which he held in one hand. The other two Sadhus were still fast asleep. The wakeful one ceased from his morning toilet, looked up at me and asked again for alms.

The full blaze of the sunlight now began pouring its gold over the mountain side which faced the dawn. The warmth of a new day had begun. It was a glorious morning. The sky was luminously clear, washed by the storm. The amazing beauty of the Hills, in the golden sunshine, banished all the bad dreams of the night. I could see my friend standing on the verandah and hurried quickly towards him.

"How did you sleep?" I asked with an intense anxiety that I could not conceal. "Oh, first rate," he said. "I was delightfully warm in my room all the night through. But what of you?"

He glanced towards my dishevelled bed and saw his own blanket lying unused on the ground. The night's secret was out and I made the confession that was needed.

We are told that the release of a deep-seated inhibition helps to purge the mind. In this respect modern science agrees with the ancient doctors of the Church. Certainly the confession which I made to him of all my night adventures cleared away the suppressed shame that still remained unexposed and we had a hearty laugh together. The walk through the bracing mountain air completed the cure. I came back to Madras a saner and wiser man.

VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

Richard B. Gregg

I. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION

VOLUNTARY simplicity of living has been advocated and practiced by the founders of most of the great religions,—Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tse, Moses and Mohammed,—also by many saints and wise men such as St. Francis, John Woolman, the Hindu rishis, the Hebrew prophets, the Moslem sufis ; by many artists and scientists ; and by such great modern leaders as Lenin and Gandhi. It has been followed also by members of military armies and monastic orders,—organizations which have had great and prolonged influence on the world. Simplicity has always been one of the testimonies of the Mennonites and of the Society of Friends.

Clearly, then, there is or has been some vitally important element in this observance. But the vast quantities of things given to us by modern mass production and commerce, the developments of science and the complexities of existence in modern industrialized countries have raised widespread doubts as to the validity of this practice and principle. Our present “mental climate” is not favorable either to a clear understanding of the value of simplicity or to its practice. Simplicity seems to be a foible of saints and occasional geniuses, but not something for the rest of us.

What about it ?

Before going further, let us get a somewhat clearer idea of what we are discussing. We are not here considering asceticism in the sense of a suppression of instincts. What we mean by voluntary simplicity is not so austere and rigid. Simplicity is a relative matter, depending on climate, customs, culture, the character of the individual. For example, in India, except for those who are trying to imitate Westerners, everyone, wealthy as well as poor, sits on the floor, and there are no chairs. A large number of Americans, poor as well as rich, think they have to own a motor car, and many others consider a telephone exceedingly important. What is simplicity for an American would be far from simple to a Chinese peasant.

Voluntary simplicity involves both inner and outer condition. It means singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as

avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life. It means an ordering and guiding of our energy and our desires, a partial restraint in some directions in order to secure greater abundance of life in other directions. It involves a deliberate organization of life for a purpose. For example, the men who tried to climb Mount Everest concentrated their thoughts and energies on the planning of that expedition for several years, and in the actual attempt discarded every ounce of equipment not surely needed for that one purpose.

Of course, as different people have different purposes in life, what is relevant to the purpose of one person might not be relevant to the purpose of another. Yet it is easy to see that our individual lives and community life would be much changed if every one organized and graded and simplified his purposes so that one purpose would easily dominate all the others, and if each person then re-organized his outer life in accordance with this new arrangement of purposes, – discarding possessions and activities irrelevant to the main purpose. The degree of simplification is a matter for each individual to settle for himself, but the meaning of the principle is now perhaps clear enough for discussion, even though the applications of it may differ.

II. DOUBTS

Since an emphasis on simplicity seems nowadays to many people a mistake, let us consider their doubts before we go further.

First of all, modern machine production seems to have solved the age-old condition of scarcity of the material things needed for life. Science and invention, industrialism, commerce and transportation have made it possible to produce and distribute more and better food, clothing, housing materials, tools and equipment, comforts, and luxuries than mankind has ever had hitherto. For an American, a stroll through a ten-cent store, a chain-grocery store and a department store, followed by a perusal of a catalogue of some of the large mail-order stores, is convincing on that score, to say nothing of what meets our eye on every street. Henry Ford's idea that civilization progresses by the increase in the number of people's desires and their satisfaction, looks sensible. The vast quantities of paper and ink devoted to advertisements add emphasis to that belief. The financial and social stability of every industrialized country seems to be founded on the expectation of an ever-expanding market for mass production. Russia, as well as capitalistic nations, has this aim. The whole world appears

to be geared to this concept. Isn't it an anachronism to talk of simplicity in such an age? Is it not our duty to rise above and master the increasing complexity of life? Without irreverence, is not that what God has done in the creation and evolution of this universe?

Furthermore, to revert to simplicity would pretty surely mean for most people the re-assumption of a vast amount of drudgery which our modern complex appliances handle for us. Complex as our paraphernalia is, nevertheless, does it not protect us against famine, disease, and extremes of temperature? Do not our tractors, electric lights, gas stoves, water pipes, electric refrigerators, house heating, airplanes, steam and motor transport, telephones, lift us beyond the threshold of animal existence, remove from us oppressive fears, give us a sense of security and at least the possibility of leisure? We must surely have leisure if civilization is to advance.

Another doubt comes readily to the mind of every parent. We all want our children to have every advantage, to be healthier and stronger than we have been, to learn more than we did, to make fewer mistakes, to have better characters, to see more of the world, to be able to live fuller and richer lives, to have more power and beauty and joy. How can they in this day acquire the necessary training and education for this, how can they come into contact and association with many people and many beautiful and stimulating things and scenes if we, their parents, cramp our lives and theirs by resorting to simplicity? Do not even their bodies require a great variety of foods in order to be healthy? How is the mind to grow unless it is fed unceasingly from a wide variety of sources? Surely beauty is a most important element in the life of both individuals and communities, and how can we have beauty if we are limited by a drab, severe and monotonous simplicity of form, line, color, material, texture and tone?

Again, many people who doubt the validity of simplicity would say that if it were put into effect it would extend itself beyond the lives of individuals and claim application to group affairs. They would then naturally say, if many people "go simple," who is going to carry on the necessary complex work of the world? Governments, industries, and institutions have to be carried on and they are highly complex. Are these people who so greatly desire simplicity going to dodge their share in the complex tasks of society? In most organizations power is exercised over people. Is it right for some people to try to escape wielding that power? Who is to wield such power wisely if not those with a conscience? Is it not the duty of sensitive people to grasp power

and direct its use as well possible ? Is this cry for simplicity only a camouflage for irresponsibility, for lack of courage or failure of energy ?

These questions suggest that in this idea of simplicity there may be a danger to our community life. The existence of a large nation or a large city is nowadays inherently complex. To insist on simplicity and really put it into effect would seem to mean eventually destroying large organizations, and that means our present mode of community and national life.

So much for the doubts. Perhaps there are others, but these at least are weighty.

III. ANSWERS TO DOUBTS

Let us consider the first major doubt, to the effect that modern science and inventions have made possible a boundless supply of goods and foods of all sorts, so that the ages of scarcity and all the assumptions, thinking and morality based thereon are outmoded, including the idea of there being any value in simplicity.

Although, from an engineering point of view, technology has made it easily possible to supply all of mankind's material needs, this possibility is far from being an actuality. There is a very big "if" attached. Despite the wondrous mechanical, chemical and electrical inventions, scarcity of necessities still exists to a painful degree in every country. There are large portions of the population of the United States who do not have such comforts as water piped into the house or apartment, and furnaces to provide house warmth in winter. Yet this country is one of the wealthiest and most widely mechanized. Another failure in application of technology is shown by the vast numbers of unemployed in almost all countries,—probably more than ever before in the history of the world.

Our financial price system and debt structure controls production, distribution and the wherewithal to pay for consumption. That system operates to cause wheat to be burned in the United States while millions are starving in China: tons of oranges to be left to rot in California while children in our city slums are subject to rickets, bad teeth and other forms of ill health for the lack of vitamins in those oranges ; and so on for a long chapter.^{1a}

The great advances in science and technology have not solved the

^{1a} For other instances see "The Tragedy of Waste," by Stuart Chase, Macmillan ; Chapter V of "Capitalism and Its Culture," by Jerome Davis.

moral problems of civilization. Those advances have altered the form of some of those problems, greatly increased others, dramatized some, and made others much more difficult of solution. The just distribution of material things is not merely a problem of technique or of organization. It is primarily a moral problem.

In volume III of Arnold J. Toynbee's great "Study of History"¹ he discusses the growth of civilizations. For some sixty pages he considers what constitutes growth of civilization, including in that term growth in wisdom as well as in stature. With immense learning he traces the developments of many civilizations,—Egyptian, Sumeric, Minoan, Hellenic, Syriac, Indic, Iranian, Chinese, Babylonian, Mayan, Japanese, etc. After spreading out the evidence, he comes to the conclusion that real growth of a civilization does not consist of increasing command over the physical environment, nor of increasing command over the human environment (i. e., over other nations or civilizations), but that it lies in what he calls "etherealization"; a development of intangible relationships. He points out that this process involves both a simplification of the apparatus of life and also a transfer of interest and energy from material things to a higher sphere. He follows Bergson in equating complexity with Matter and simplicity with Life.²

To those who say that machinery and the apparatus of living are merely instruments and devices which are without moral nature in themselves, but which can be used for either good or evil, I would point out that we are all influenced by the tools and means which we use. Again and again in the lives of individuals and of nations we see that when certain means are used vigorously, thoroughly and for a long time, those means assume the character and influence of an end in themselves.³ We become obsessed by our tools. The strong quantitative elements in science, machinery and money, and in their products, tend to make the thinking and life of those who use them mechanistic and divided. The relationships which science, machinery and money create are mechanical rather than organic. Machinery and money give us more energy outwardly but they live upon and take away from us our inner energy.⁴

We think that our machinery and technology will save us time

¹ Oxford University Press, 1934.

² H. Bergson, "Two Aspects of Morals and Religion," H. Holt & Co.

³ "The Philosophy of 'As If,'" by H. Vaihinger, p. XXX, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, also an address by John Dewey to the American Philosophical Association, January, 1935

⁴ See the essay on St. Francis in "Affirmations," by Havelock Ellis, Houghton, Mifflin,

and give us more leisure, but really they make life more crowded and hurried. 5 When I install in my house a telephone, I think it will save me all the time and energy of going to market every day, and much going about for making petty inquiries and minor errands to those with whom I have dealings. True, I do use it for those purposes but I also immediately expand the circle of my frequent contacts, and that anticipated leisure time rapidly is filled by telephone calls to me or with engagements I make by the use of it. The motor car has the same effect upon our domestic life. We are all covering much bigger territory than formerly, but the expected access of leisure is conspicuous by its absence. Indeed, where the motor cars are very numerous, as on Fifth Avenue, New York, you can now, at many times during the day, walk faster than you can go in a taxi or bus.

The mechanized countries are not the countries noted for their leisure. Any traveller to the Orient can testify that the tempo of life there is far more leisurely than it is in the industrialized West. To a lesser degree, the place to find relative leisure in the United States is not in the highly mechanized cities, but in the country.

Moreover, we continually overlook the fact that our obsession with machinery spoils our inner poise and sense of values, without which the time spared from necessitous toil ceases to be leisure and becomes time without meaning, or with sinister meaning,—time to be “killed” by movies, radio or watching baseball games, or unemployment with its degradation of morale and personality.

Those who think that complexities of transportation, communication and finance have relieved the world from underfeeding and famine are mistaken. Probably their error comes from the fact that they belong to the comfortable and well-to-do groups among the powerful of the world. They have not understood, if indeed they have read, the statistics and reports of social and relief workers in regard to the extent of undernourishment in their own populations and in the rest of the world.

Those who shudder at the appalling loss of life by the Black Death in mediaeval Europe, forget the tens of millions killed by influenza during the World War. Those who point with pride at the statistics

Boston. Also Samuel Butler's "Erewhon," E. P. Dutton Co., New York. "What is European Civilization" by Wilhelm Haas, Oxford University Press, 1929.

5 "Social Decay and Regeneration," by R. Austin Freeman, Constable, London, 1921; "Men and Machines," by Stuart Chase pp. 350-335, Macmillan; Chapter VIII of "Technics and Civilization," by Lewis Mumford, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1934.

of the lowering incidence of contagious diseases often fail to mention the rising amount of degenerative organic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, kidney, heart and circulatory failures, and of insanity. So distinguished a physiologist as Alexis Carrel in his recent book, "Man the Unknown," has given evidence sufficient to startle and humble our pride in respect to the alleged "conquest of disease." ⁶ He states that merely increasing the age to which people live tends to add to the number of aged people whom the young must support, and does not necessarily spell progress. He even believes that our modern techniques for comfort are doing our peoples grave biological harm by atrophying our adaptive mechanisms, to say nothing of the social evils created by industrialism. ⁷

No,—the way to master the increasing complexity of life is not through more complexity. The way is to turn inward to that which unifies all,—not the intellect but the spirit, and then to devise and put into operation new forms and modes of economic and social life that will truly and vigorously express that spirit. As an aid to that and as a corrective to our feverish over-mechanization, simplicity is not out-moded but greatly needed.

There is a doubt whether simplicity is compatible with large organizations of any kind, so that insistence upon simplicity in that field would result in the destruction of large organizations upon which so much of our modern life depends. Correlated with this is a doubt whether the avoidance of exercising power over others, as part of an effort to attain simplicity, is not really a dodging of responsibility. As to these my belief is that our present world has too many occasions and opportunities for the exercise of power over other people. Our great executive organizations,—financial, manufacturing, commercial, and governmental,—are so large that it is impossible for their chief executive officers to know the full truth about what is happening to the people in them. Indeed, there is sure to be great and constant misunderstanding, injustice and consequent resentment and friction. That is true of all large executive organizations, no matter what their field of action. The larger they are the more certainly does this condition exist. Their very size makes them humanly inefficient, whether or not they are mechanically or financially efficient. Such a result is a matter of psychological necessity.

Hence we are unable to wield vast powers without probably doing

⁶ Alexis Carrel, "Man the Unknown," Harper & Bros., pp. 114-116, 154, 155.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 233, 303, 304.

more harm than good. There is too much concentration of power in the hands of too few people. I agree with Mr. Justice Brandeis that our organizations are too large for human efficiency. To say that only by the concentration of wealth can we attain great technical advances is not a valid argument, for already our technical development is out of proportion with the rest of our growth. If we want our civilization to last we must prevent megalomania and keep the different departments of our common life in harmony.⁸ We need to decentralize our economic, social and political life. If larger aggregations are desirable for some purposes, it should be possible to integrate the small units more loosely than at present, and for different functions. Such changes would give society greater security, not less. In view of the foregoing ideas and some others I doubt whether complete socialism is an effective answer.

Having discussed some of the major doubts, let us turn to the reasons for simplicity.

IV. ECONOMIC REASONS FOR SIMPLICITY

There are a number of reasons for voluntary simplicity of living, a considerable number, but perhaps not so many as to make the discussion of simplicity itself complex. If it seems complex, it is because so much intellectual clutter and underbrush has to be removed in order to see clearly.

Since our thinking today runs predominantly to economics, suppose we consider first the economic aspects of our subject.

Economics has at least three divisions: production, distribution and consumption. Of material goods we are not all producers or distributors, but we are all consumers. Simplicity of living affects primarily consumption. It sets a standard of consumption. Consumption is the area within which each individual can affect the economic life of the community. Small as his own share may be, that is the area within which every person can exercise his control over the forces of economic production and distribution. If he regards himself as responsible for our joint economic welfare he has a duty to think out

⁸ See "The Great Society," by Graham Wallas, Macmillan; "A Study of History," by Arnold Toynbee, Vol. III, Oxford University Press; "Technics and Civilization," by Lewis Mumford, Ch. VIII, Harcourt & Co., New York; "Capitalism and Its Culture," by Jerome Davis, Ch. IV; "The Modern Corporation and Private Property," by Berle and Means.

and decide upon and adhere to a standard of consumption for himself and his family.

The economic system in which we find ourselves is gravely defective in operation. Greed and competition are two of its harmful elements. Competitive ostentation,—“keeping up with the Joneses,”—is a prominent feature of modern social life.⁹ Simplicity of living acts as a deterrent to such ostentation and hence to both greed and competition. Therefore, all those who desire to reform the existing economic system can take an effective part by living simply and urging and encouraging others to do likewise. This thing comes close to all of us. Capitalism is no mere exterior organization of bankers and industrialists. It consists of a spirit and attitude and habitual actions in and among all of us. Even those who desire to reform or end it usually have within themselves certain of its attitudes and habits of mind and desire. If capitalism is to be reformed or ended, that change will alter the lives and thoughts and feelings of every one of us. Conversely, if I wish actively to participate in this transformation, I myself must begin to alter my own life in the desired direction. If I share too heavily in the regime I want to change, it becomes too difficult for me to disentangle myself, and I cease to become effective as a reformer. Those who live on income from investments will not dare to advocate deep economic changes, unless they live simply enough to permit a lowering of their income without too great an upset in their mode of life. My changes must be both inner and outer and must, I believe, be in the direction of more simplicity.

Exploitation of human beings is an ancient evil, older than capitalism. It existed under European feudalism, and probably in most of the older forms of economic and social organization in every continent. It goes on today all around us, and practically everyone of us shares in it at least indirectly. The first step I can take to cut down my share in exploitation is to live simply. All luxuries require unnecessary labour, as John Woolman so clearly showed.¹⁰ The production and consumption of luxuries divert labor and capital from tasks which are socially more productive and beneficial; they often take land away from wise use; and they waste raw materials which might be used to better advantage. This tends to increase the prices of necessities and thereby lowers real wages and makes the struggle of the poor harder.

⁹ Thorstein Veblen, “Theory of the Leisure Class,” Vanguard Press, New York.

¹⁰ “The Journal and Essays of John Woolman,” ed. by Amelia M. Gummere, Macmillan, London, 1932.

Since poor people wish to imitate the rich, we see working girls on small wages buying furs, expensive shoes and cosmetics, and depriving themselves of proper food and warm clothing in order to do so. In such a case the ostentatious luxury of the rich clearly is a factor in causing hardships and sickness, and resulting in unnecessary labor on the part of the poor, to repair those losses. The fashions in luxuries often change arbitrarily and suddenly, and such changes create unemployment. Those who work at luxury trades are, in time of economic depression, in the most insecure position of all, because then the spending for luxuries is the first thing to stop. Therefore the fewer people there are engaged in luxury trades, the more secure the population will be. Seemingly to "provide work" by buying luxuries operates to depress real wages for a much larger group and actively bolsters up the regime which steadily throws more and more men out of work, thus "giving" a little with one hand while taking away much more with the other.

There are certain elemental human needs which have to be met,—food, clothing and shelter. These vary according to climate, custom and development of civilization, yet in any one place certain minima of these must be met if life is to exist at all. And if life is to be vigorous, there must be a margin above the minima, so as to provide physiological reserves for endurance, resistance to disease, and sudden emergencies requiring unusual exertion; and to provide mental and moral reserves for the work of adaptation to changes and making progress in civilization.

Simplicities must not infringe upon the minimal needs of individuals, or upon even the wise surplus margins above those minima. But inasmuch as the desires of mankind are boundless, and we all tend to rationalize our desires, there is endless dispute as to how wide the surplus margin should be in order to be wise. A recent study by Professor E. L. Thorndike, of Columbia University, indicates that the actual American expenditures for food, clothing and housing are considerably larger than the actual necessities to sustain life.^{10a} He took from the United States census and similar reliable sources the total classified expenditure of the people of the United States. According to the press report he said, "By the aid of a consensus of psychologists, I have divided each item of our peoples' expenses among the wants to which it probably ministers, and then combined the results

^{10a} Presidential address at St. Louis meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. See *New York Times*, Dec. 31, 1935.

into a list of wants and the amounts paid for the satisfaction thereof. . . . The payments for sensory pleasures, security, approval of others, and the pleasures of companionship and sociability, including romance and courtship, are in each case close in magnitude to the amount paid for freedom from hunger. . . . We pay more for entertainment (including the intellectual pleasures and the sensory pleasures of sight, sound, taste and smell) than for protection against cold, heat, wet, animals, disease, criminals and other bad people, and pains." The fact that we spend annually seven hundred million dollars for cosmetics and beauty parlors, and in 1919 spent one billion dollars for candy, fifty million dollars for chewing gum, and two billion, one hundred and ten million dollars for cigars, cigarettes, tobacco and snuff adds pungency to Dr. Thorndike's observations. He continued, "Less than one-third of what we spent went for wants which must be satisfied to keep the human species alive and self-perpetuating. The rest went chiefly to keep us amused and comfortable, physically, intellectually, morally and especially socially." He analyzed our total expenditures for food thus:—"56 per cent to satisfy hunger; 15 per cent to gratify the pleasures of taste and smell; 10 per cent for the pleasures of companionship and social intercourse, including courtship; $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for the approval of others, and smaller percentages for protection against disease and cold, enjoyment of the comfort of others and the pleasures of vision." Similarly in regard to expenditures for clothing, he believed that nearly half the total was for reasons other than mere bodily protection. The approval of others, self approval, pleasure of vision, courtship, and other elements are strong causes of expenditure for clothes.

In view of all this, it is clear that in our expenditures of money, while elemental necessities must be met, nevertheless there is above that line a wide realm for the application of the principle of simplicity.

A guiding principle for the limitation of property was suggested by Ruskin: "Possession is in use only, which for each man is sternly limited; so that such things and so much of them as he can use, are, indeed, well for him, or Wealth; and more of them, or any other things, are ill for him, or Illth." ¹¹

We are told that there is a close relationship between economic

¹¹ Munera Pulveris, World Classics Library, Oxford University Press, and other editions.

and political factors in society. With that in mind, suppose we consider the possible political implications of simplicity.

V. SIMPLICITY AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE

It is interesting that three moderns with immense political influence, Lenin, Gandhi, and Kagawa, have led lives of extreme simplicity. Their simplicity has been a factor in their political power. Political power is based on the trust of the masses in the leader. By a life of great simplicity over a long period of time the leader demonstrates his unselfishness and sincerity,—two elements which tend to generate and maintain trust. The masses feel that such a leader will not “sell them out.” By sharing to that extent in the circumstances of the great majority of people the leader keeps aware of their problems and keeps *en rapport* with them. By so acting he identifies them with himself, as well as himself with them, thus encouraging them to feel that they too, despite small material means, may become significant in the life of the community or nation. In spirit they feel closer to him and feel themselves enabled to share in his greatness, and thus their self-respect, their courage, their endurance and morale are enhanced. If an entire ruling group or intelligentsia were always to live simply, the moral unity, self-respect and endurance of the entire nation would be enhanced. If anyone wishes strong and enduring political power for a great cause, he will be wise to simplify his life greatly.

VI. SOCIAL ASPECTS OF SIMPLICITY

We come now to the social aspects of our subject. Havelock Ellis¹² states that St. Francis espoused poverty and simplicity in order to secure unrestricted contact with nature and with men. “The free play of the individual soul in contact with nature and men, Francis instinctively felt, is joy and liberation.” “It is in the simpler and elementary things that our life consists.” Such unity with nature and men is something which our industrialized modern society is sorely lacking and which its individual members greatly crave, as indicated by the zest and release which they get from an occasional holiday in the country or at the seashore. Lack of unity between men is now widely prevalent.

¹² In “Affirmations,” by Havelock Ellis, Houghton, Mifflin, Boston.

To give a concrete instance of what I mean by unity and disunity, it would be consistent with a real awareness of human unity if I should invite into my house for a meal and a night's lodging a starving man who has knocked at my door. But if my rugs are so fine that I am afraid his dirty shoes may ruin them, I hesitate. If I have many valuable objects of art or much fine silverware, I also hesitate for fear he may pocket some of them or tell men who may later steal them from the house. If my furniture and hangings bespeak great wealth I mistrust him lest he hold me up; or perhaps if I am less suspicious and more courageous and more sensitively imaginative, I fear lest the contrast between his poverty and my abundance will make him secretly envious, or resentful, or bitter, or make him feel ill at ease. Or perhaps he is so very dirty that I fear he has vermin and I am revolted by that thought and am so far from him humanly that I do not know how to deal with him humanely. In this case it is clear that my lack of simplicity acts as a barrier between him and me. The prolonged lack of simplicity of our whole society has increased the distance between his thoughts, feelings and ways, and mine, and so adds to the social barrier. That troubles me.

Or again, if I have much real and personal property and am interested in it, my time is very largely occupied in looking after it. I will not have much time for simple neighborliness. A selfish and aggressive neighbor may infringe on my boundaries so as to use some of my land next to his own. He would not have been so likely to do that if I had previously been truly friendly with him, had shared some of my garden produce with him and his family and had been kind to his children. So my failure to do the things which would have created good feeling and a sense of human unity in him has resulted in trouble between us. The lack of simplicity in my own life has engrossed too much of my time and energy and has been an effective cause in creating disunity.

Moreover, if, as some people believe, we are at the beginning of a period of economic decline, it may well be that great simplicity of living is the main condition upon which the learned professions which require leisure will be permitted to exist. If so, the previous voluntary adoption of greater simplicity by the learned professions would count for their security and make the transition easier for them. Something of that is recognized in the age-old Hindu society in which the Brahmins,—the teachers, physicians, priests and other learned professions,—are morally bound to and predominantly actually do maintain

lives of extreme simplicity as an essential element in their professional code, to which great respect is accorded.

VII. NON-VIOLENCE REQUIRES SIMPLICITY

For those who believe in non-violence, simplicity is essential. Many possessions involve violence in the form of police protection and law suits. The concentration of much property in one person's possession creates resentment and envy or a sense of inferiority among others who do not have it. Such feelings, after they have accumulated long enough, become the motives which some day find release in acts of mob violence. Hence, the possession of much property becomes inconsistent with principles of non-violence. Simplicity helps to prevent violence. Again, the non-violent person may some day become a conscientious objector and subject to punishment by governments,—possibly jail sentence. If he has habitually practiced simplicity he will not have so much to lose that it would weaken his stand nor will he be too fearful of jail life. Also, unless he has habitually practiced simple living there will be in the minds of others a slight doubt as to the completeness of his sincerity and unselfishness. That doubt will hamper the persuasiveness of his gentle resistance and voluntary suffering when the time comes for non-violent resistance.

A lesser consideration is that in these days of rapid change, it is easier to adapt oneself if one is not much cumbered with things. Physical mobility in these days is an asset.

VIII. SIMPLICITY AND RELIGION

Besides these social or moral considerations there are religious implications in the matter of simplicity.

The greatest gulf in society is between the rich and the poor. The practice of simplicity by the well-to-do helps to bridge this gulf and may be therefore an expression of love. The rich young man was advised by Jesus to sell all his goods and give to the poor and thus simplify his life, in order to perfect his religious life. No doubt such an act would have resulted in more than simplification of the young man's life, but that would have been one of the results.

Hinduism and Buddhism have also emphasized the value of simplicity.

The anonymous author of "The Practice of Christianity"¹³ believes

¹³ Anonymous, published by Macmillan, London, 1923.

that tender-heartedness,—gentle kindness,—is the supreme virtue and the essence of Jesus' teachings. She shows that such virtues as sincerity, courage, loyalty, esprit de corps, obedience, self-denial and temperance are displayed in every unjust war, in all forms of political and economic repression, in religious persecution, and often indeed among criminals. They make a strong character but not necessarily a good character. Goodness is not merely an assemblage of other virtues. The essence of the sort of goodness which Jesus describes in his parables and sayings and illustrates by his life may be summed up, she says, in the phrase "tender-heartedness."

Tender-heartedness, together with great intelligence and strength of character, has in the cases of such leaders as Buddha, Jesus, St. Francis, George Fox, John Woolman and Gandhi, resulted in simplicity. Tender-heartedness seems to have been one of the elements which compelled those men to recognize human unity and to live in accordance with it and to share their property and lives with those who had need. Thus simplicity is, perhaps, a part of utter gentleness, and may be essential to those who would really practice religion.

The practice of simplicity means that you have decided to lay up your treasure in heaven rather than on earth ; that your treasure will consist of intangibles rather than physical things ; that it will not lie in the realm of material power ; that you prefer to cultivate and amass the reality of human trust rather than its symbol, money. Practicing simplicity means not only that you have made this decision, but that you are doing one of the important parts of it, you are conforming with one of its essential pre-conditions, you are expressing your preference by actual conduct.

IX. SIMPLICITY AND PERSONALITY

It is often said that possessions are important because they enable the possessors thereby to enrich and enhance their personalities and characters. The claim is that by means of ownership the powers of self-direction and self-control inherent in personality become real. Property, they say, gives stability, security, independence, a real place in the larger life of the community, a feeling of responsibility, all of which are elements of vigorous personality.¹⁴

¹⁴ "Property : A Study in Social Psychology," by Ernest Beaglehole, Allen & Unwin, London, 1931.

Nevertheless, the greatest characters, those who have influenced the largest numbers of people for the longest time have been people with extremely few possessions. For example, Buddha, Jesus, Moses, Mohammed, Kagawa, Socrates, St. Francis, Confucius, Sun Yat Sen, Lenin, Gandhi, many scientists, inventors and artists. "The higher ranges of life where personality has fullest play and is most nearly free from the tyranny of circumstance, are precisely those where it depends least on possessions. . . . The higher we ascend among human types and the more intense personalities become, the more the importance of possessions dwindles."¹⁵

The reason for this is something that we usually fail to realize, namely that the essence of personality does not lie in its isolated individuality, its separateness from other people, its uniqueness, but in its basis of relationships with other personalities. It is a capacity for friendship, for fellowship, for intercourse, for entering imaginatively into the lives of others. At its height it is a capacity for and exercise of love.¹⁶ Friendship and love do not require ownership of property for either their ordinary or their finest expression. Creativeness does not depend on possession. Intangible relationships are more important to the individual and to society than property is. If a person by love and service wins people's trust, that trust will find expression in such forms as to preserve life and increase its happiness and beauty.

It is true that a certain kind of pleasure and satisfaction come from acquiring mastery over material things,—for example, learning to drive a motor car,—or from displaying ownership of things as a proof of power.¹⁷ But that sort of power and that sort of satisfaction are not so secure, so permanent, so deep, so characteristic of mental and moral maturity as are some others.

The most permanent, most secure and most satisfying sort of possession of things other than the materials needed for bodily life, lies not in physical control and power of exclusion but in intellectual, emotional and spiritual understanding and appreciation. This is especially clear in regard to beauty. He who appreciates and understands a song, a symphony, a painting, some sculpture or architecture

15 "The Christian Attitude Toward Private Property," by Vida D. Scudder (a pamphlet), Morehouse Pub. Co., Milwaukee, Wis.: cf. also Chapter VI of "Our Economic Morality," by Harry F. Ward, Macmillan.

16 Essay on "Property and personality," by Henry Scott Holland, in "Property, Its Duties and Rights," edited by Charles Gore, Bishop of Oxford, Macmillan, London, 1915.

17 "The Theory of the Leisure Class," by Thorstein Veblen, Vanguard Press.

gets more satisfaction than he who owns musical instruments or works of art. The world of nature and the museums afford ample scope for such spiritual possession. Such appreciation is what some economists call "psychic goods." Entering into the spirit which lies at the heart of things is what enriches and enlarges personality.

There is the simplicity of the fool and the simplicity of the wise man. The fool is simple because his mind and will are incapable of dealing with many things. The wise man is simple not for that reason but because he knows that all life, both individual and group, has a certain few essential strands or elements and outside of those are a vast multiplicity of other things. If the few essential strands are kept healthy and vigorous, the rest of the details develop almost automatically, like the bark and twigs and leaves of a tree. So the wise man confines most of his attention to the few essentials of life, and that constitutes his simplicity.

We cannot have deep and enduring satisfaction, happiness or joy unless we have self-respect. There is good reason to believe that self-respect is the basis for all higher morality.¹⁸ We cannot have self-respect unless our lives are an earnest attempt to express the finest and most enduring values which we are able to appreciate. That is to say, unless we come into close and right relationships with our fellow-men, with nature and with Truth (or God), we cannot achieve full self-respect. Or, as Rufus Jones puts it, we must keep our "honour before God."

Simplicity of living is, as we have seen, one of the conditions of reaching and maintaining these right relationships. Therefore simplicity is an important condition for permanent satisfaction with life. And inasmuch as national self-respect is a necessary condition for the maintenance of a nation or a civilization¹⁹ it would seem that widespread simplicity as a cultural habit of an entire nation, would in the long run be essential for its civilization to endure. At any rate, in the two civilizations which have endured the longest, the Chinese and the East Indian, simplicity of living has been a marked characteristic. True, the simplicity of living of the Indian masses has been largely the enforced simplicity of poverty. Nevertheless, among the real intellectual and moral leaders of India, the Brahmans and social reformers like

¹⁸ See the psychologists, Wm. McDougal and A. G. Tansley, also R. V. Feldman's book, cited below. The loss of self-respect is one of the greatest harms wrought by unemployment.

¹⁹ "The Domain of Selfhood," by R. V. Feldman, p. 95. Allen & Unwin, London, 1934.

Gandhi, voluntary simplicity has been and still is a definite and widely observed element of their code and custom. This is true also, I believe, of the leaders of China, the scholars.

Those by whom simplicity is dreaded because it spells lack of comfort, may be reminded that some voluntary suffering or discomfort is an inherent and necessary part of all creation, so that to avoid all voluntary suffering means the end of creativeness.

X. SIMPLICITY A KIND OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HYGIENE

There is one further value to simplicity. It may be regarded as a mode of psychological hygiene. Just as eating too much is harmful to the body, even though the quality of the food eaten is excellent, so it seems that there may be a limit to the number of things or the amount of property which a person may own and yet keep himself psychologically healthy. The possession of many things and of great wealth creates so many possible choices and decisions to be made every day that it becomes a nervous strain. Often the choices have to be narrow. The Russian physiologist, Pavlov, while doing experiments on conditioned reflexes with dogs, presented one dog with the necessity of making many choices involving fine discriminations, and the dog actually had a nervous breakdown and had to be sent away for six months' rest before he became normal again.²⁰ Subsequently, American psychologists, by similar methods, produced neuroses in sheep by requiring many repetitions of mere inhibition and action; and as inhibition is an element in all choices, they believe it was that element which may have caused the neurosis in Pavlov's dog.²¹ Of course, people are more highly organized than dogs and are easily able to weigh more possibilities and endure more inhibitions and make more choices and nice distinctions without strain, but nevertheless making decisions is work and can be overdone.

One effect of this upon the will, and hence upon success in life, was deftly stated by Confucius: "Here is a man whose desires are few. In some things he will not be able to maintain his resolution but they will be few."

²⁰ See "Lectures on Conditioned Reflexes," by J. P. Pavlov, Oxford University Press; also Henry E. Garrett, "Great Experiments in Psychology," Century Co., New York, 1936.

²¹ "Experiments on Experimental Neurosis in Sheep," by O. D. Anderson and H. S. Liddell, 34 Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry, No. 2, p. 330.

"Here is a man whose desires are many. In some things he will be able to maintain his resolution but they will be few."

If a person lives among great possessions, they constitute an environment which influences him. His sensitiveness to certain important human relations is apt to become clogged and dulled, his imagination in regard to the subtle but important elements of personal relationship or in regard to lives in circumstances less fortunate than his own is apt to become less active and less keen. This is not always the result, but the exception is rare. When enlarged to inter-group relationships this tends to create social misunderstandings and friction.

The athlete, in order to win his contest, strips off the non-essentials of clothing, is careful of what he eats, simplifies his life in a number of ways. Great achievements of the mind, of the imagination, and of the will also require similar discriminations and disciplines.

Observance of simplicity is a recognition of the fact that everyone is greatly influenced by his surroundings and all their subtle implications. The power of environment modifies all living organisms. Therefore each person will be wise to select and create deliberately such an immediate environment of home things as will influence his character in the direction which he deems most important and such as will make it easier for him to live in the way that he believes wisest. Simplicity gives him a certain kind of freedom and clearness of vision.

XI. SIMPLICITY AND BEAUTY

The foregoing discussion has answered, I think, much of the second strong doubt which we mentioned near the beginning, the doubt that parents have as to the harm that simplicity might do to the minds and general cultural development of their children. In regard to aesthetics, simplicity should not connote ugliness. The most beautiful and restful room I ever entered was in a Japanese country inn, without any furniture or pictures or applied ornaments. Its beauty lay in its wonderful proportions and the soft colors of unpainted wood beams, paper walls and straw matting. There can be beauty in complexity but complexity is not the essence of beauty. Harmony of line, proportion and color are much more important. In a sense, simplicity is an important element in all great art, for it means the removal of all details that are irrelevant to a given purpose. It is one of the arts within the great art of life. And perhaps the mind can be guided best if its activities are always kept organically related to the most important purposes in life.

Mahatma Gandhi believes that the great need of young people is not so much education of the head as education of the heart.

XII. A CAUTION

If simplicity of living is a valid principle there is one important precaution and condition of its application. I can explain it best by something which Mahatma Gandhi said to me. We were talking about simple living and I said that it was easy for me to give up most things but that I had a greedy mind and wanted to keep my many books. He said, "Then don't give them up. As long as you derive inner help and comfort from anything, you should keep it. If you were to give it up in a mood of self-sacrifice or out of a stern sense of duty, you would continue to want it back, and that unsatisfied want would make trouble for you. Only give up a thing when you want some other condition so much that the thing no longer has any attraction for you, or when it seems to interfere with that which is more greatly desired." It is interesting to note that this advice agrees with modern Western psychology of wishes and suppressed desires. This also substantiates what we said near the beginning of our discussion, that the application of the principle of simplicity is for each person or each family to work out sincerely for themselves.

ALONG TIME'S CHARIOT-PATH

SINCE the first day-break of human age misted with myths
they walk wonder-eyed on strange shores, the seekers,
and the fighters march at the drum-beats of storm gods
towards an ever-distant time,
along an endless stretch of battlefields.

The earth trembles at the ceaseless treads of deadly pursuits,
the midnight sleep is troubled,
the easeful life is embittered
and death is made precious.

Those who rushed out at the urge of the road
ever move on beyond the boundaries of death,
and those who clung to their homes
are doomed to lie encased in the shell
of a rigid life
in a soulless world.

Who is there who must be lured by an insipid peace,
by a stagnant stinking security,
and dully choose to build his shelter in a realm of ghosts ?

In the beginning man found himself
at the cross-road of existence.

The provision of his journey was given him in his blood,
in his dream, in his path itself.

When he sat down to fix his plan and raised his tower
high among clouds
its base crumbled away ;

he built his dyke only to let it be swept away by floods.

Time and again he fell asleep in his hall of tired carousal
in the gasping light of smoke-bedimmed lamps
till a sudden assault of a nightmare choked him,

rattled his ribs together
and he woke up in a groaning agony of death.
A sudden awakening has often startled him forth
from the ring-fence of decrepit centuries
towards undefined horizons,
and an impulse forced him away from the fetter of his
swollen success
reminding him that pillars of triumph across
Time's chariot-path
bury the builder himself under their nameless ruin.
He hastens to join the army of the wreckers of patterns
coming from all ages,
crossing hills,
breaking stone walls,
bursting iron gates
while the sky throbs with the drum-beats of
Eternity.

Rabindranath Tagore



ARJUNA

Sandipal Bose

SRI AUROBINDO ON D. H. LAWRENCE

(*Dilip Kumar Roy's letter to Sri Aurobindo and the reply*)

To Sri Aurobindo,

I was reading a most interesting book : "The Letters of D. H. Lawrence." You know I have always had great admiration for Lawrence, though he is still hated by many people as an abomination. I agree with Mr. Aldous Huxley when he says in the Introduction to these Letters: "He (Lawrence) might say or write things that were demonstrably incorrect or even, on occasion, absurd. But to a very considerable extent it didn't matter. What mattered was always Lawrence himself, was the fire that burned within him, that glowed with so strange and marvellous a radiance in almost all he wrote." It is not to tell you this, however, that I beat about the bush: it is to ask you to pronounce, first, on some of the deep things he writes in these letters which have almost a yogic accent, I should say ; and, secondly, on his modernist theory of poetry, his defence of the so-called rugged poetry which I consider unsound at best, and absurd at worst. So please bear with me if I quote from these letters some passages rather randomly, since my object is but to draw you out. What I find remarkable is Lawrence's belief in the Devil and magic, as showing a remarkable occult intuition, to say the least. He says:

"I have been reading another book on *Occultism*. . . . It is very interesting and important—though antipathetic to me. Certainly magic is a reality—not by any means the nonsense Bertie (Bertrand) Russell says it is. . . . I have had a great struggle with the powers of Darkness lately. . . don't tell me there is no Devil: there is a Prince of Darkness. . . . It is no good now thinking that to understand a man from his own point of view is to be happy about him. I can imagine the mind of a rat, as it slithers along in the dark, pointing its sharp nose. But I can never feel happy about it, I must always want to kill it. It contains a principle evil. There is a principle of evil. Let us acknowledge it once and for all. I saw it so plainly in X, it made me sick. I am sick with the knowledge of the prevalence of evil, as if it were some insidious disease. . . ."

Lawrence is hated nevertheless, I mean in spite of his abhorrence of evil and love of Truth and Beauty. No wonder: he was too outspoken. "I don't see," he writes to Lady Ottoline, "why there

should be monogamy for people who can't have full satisfaction in one person, because they themselves are too split, because they act in themselves separately." But it is not these things I want to ask you about. Let me rather quote his theory of poetry where I fundamentally disagree, I mean with his championship of "starkness", "bareness", which is synonymous with the modern penchant for ruggedness and (to me, anyway) unloveliness. For I do believe that rhythm is not merely an ornament of poetry: it is of the essence of poetry. Hear what Lawrence says, however: "The essence of poetry," he writes to Catherine Carswell, "with us in this age of stark and unlovely actualities is a stark directness, without a shadow of a lie, or a shadow of deflection anywhere. Everything can go, but this stark, bare, rocky directness, this alone makes poetry to-day." I would ask you to explain what exactly Lawrence drives at, and why on earth he plumps for such an ungainly view of poetry: Lawrence, who is such a master of expression and a lover, I am convinced, of Beauty. Listen just to a few more random passages that struck me as refreshing: "I am weary," he writes to Middleton Murry, (who, in his biography, calls him a prophet: he *was* that in a sense, don't you think ?) "I find people ultimately boring. . . . I am weary of humanity and human things. One is happy in the thoughts only that transcend humanity. . . ." Also hear what he has to say of seclusion for an ideal and how beautifully he says it: "I am glad," he writes to Catherine Carswell, "you are beginning to reject people. . . . They *are* a destructive force. . . . And one is so few and so fragile, in one's own small, subtle air of life. *How* one must cherish the frail, precious buds of the unknown life in one's soul. They are the unborn children of one's hope and living happiness, and one is so frail to bring them forth. Shelter yourself above all from the world, save yourself, screen and hide yourself, go subtly in a secret retreat, where no one knows you . . . hiding like a bird, and living busily the other creative life, like a bird building a nest. Be sure to keep this bush that burns with the presence of God, where you build your nest, this world of worlds, hidden from mankind. . . ." It is not for nothing that Aldous Huxley in his admirable introduction to Lawrence styles his letters "beautiful and absorbingly interesting"—adding that Lawrence was "one of the few people I feel real respect for. Of most other eminent people I have met I feel that at any rate I belong to the same species as they do. But this man is something different and superior in kind, not degree. 'Different and superior in kind': I think almost everyone who knew him well must have felt

that Lawrence was this. . . . To be with Lawrence was a kind of adventure, a voyage of discovery into newness and otherness." Now hear Lawrence again:

"I hope to God the new religious era is starting into being also at other points, and that soon there will be a body of believers, in this howling desert of unbelief and sensation. . . . One must put away all ordinary common sense, I think, and work only from the invisible world. The visible world is not true. The invisible world is true and real. One must live and work from that. . . . There must be a new heaven and a new earth, and a new heart and soul: all new: a pure resurrection.

Now like a crocus in the autumn time,
My soul comes naked from the falling night
Of death, a Cyclamen, a crocus flower
Of windy autumn when the winds all sweep
The hosts away to death, where heap on heap
The leaves are smouldering in a funeral wind.

I don't know why on earth I say these things to you, Lady Cynthia ! But the conscious life—which you adhere to—is no more than a masquerade of death: there is a living unconscious life. If only we would shut our eyes ! If only we were all struck blind and things vanished from our sight—we should marvel that we had fought and lived for shallow, visionary, peripheral nothingnesses ! . . . So vivid a vision, everything so visually poignant, it is like that concentrated moment when a drowning man sees all his past crystallised into one jewel of recollection ! . . . It is the vision of all that I am, all I have become, and ceased to be. . . . There is a morning which dawns like an iridescence on the wings of sleeping darkness, till the darkness bursts and flies off in glory, dripping with the rose of morning. . . . Why are you so sad about your life, dear Ottoline ? Only let go all this will to have things in your control. We must all submit to be helpless and obliterated, quite obliterated, destroyed, cast away into nothingness. There is something will rise out of it, something new, that now is not. This which we are must cease to be, that we may come to pass in another being. . . . I tell this to you, I tell it to myself—to let go, to release from my will everything that my will would hold, to lapse back into darkness and unknowing. There must be deep winter before there can be spring. . . . Let me only be still and know we can force nothing and compel nothing, can only nourish in the darkness the unuttered buds of the new life that shall be. . . . I am laid up . . . and wonder

why one should ever trouble to get up, into this filthy world. The war stinks worse and worse ! . . . Did you like the Ajanta frescoes ? I loved them: the pure fulfilment—the pure simplicity—the complete, almost perfect relations between the men and the women—the most perfect things I have ever seen. Botticelli is vulgar beside them. They are the zenith of a very lovely civilization, the crest of a very perfect wave of human development. I have loved them beyond everything pictorial that I have ever seen—the perfect, perfect intimate relation between the men and the women: so simple and complete, such a perfection of passion, a fullness, a whole blossom. That which we call passion is a very one-sided thing, based chiefly on hatred and *Wille zur Macht* (Will to Power). There is no Will to Power here—it is so lovely—in these frescoes !”

Dilip

Dilip,

One might imagine Lawrence was a Yogi who had missed his way and come into a European body to work out his difficulties. “To lapse back into darkness and unknowing” sounds like the Christian mystic’s passage into the “night of God”, but I think Lawrence thought of a new efflorescence from the subconscious while the mystic’s Night of God was a stage between ordinary consciousness and the Superconscious Light.

The passage you have quoted certainly shows that Lawrence had an idea of the new spiritual birth. What he has written there could be an accurate indication of the process of the change, the putting away of the old consciousness and the emergence of a new from the now invisible within, not an illusory periphery like the present mental vital physical ignorance but a truth becoming from the true being within us. He speaks of the transition as a darkness created by the rejection of the outer mental light, a darkness intervening before the true light from the Invisible can come. Certain Christian mystics have said the same thing and the Upanishad also speaks of the luminous Being beyond the darkness. But in India the rejection of the mental light, the vital stir, the physical hard narrow concreteness leads more often not to a darkness but to a wide emptiness and silence which begins afterwards to fill with the light of a deeper, greater, truer consciousness, a consciousness full of peace, harmony, joy and freedom. I think Lawrence was held back from realising because he was seeking for the new birth in the subconscious vital and taking that for the Invisible within—he mistook Life for Spirit, whereas Life can only be an expression of the Spirit.

That too perhaps was the reason for his preoccupation with a vain and baffled sexuality.

His appreciation of the Ajanta paintings must have been due to the same drive that made him seek for a new poetry as well as a new truth from within. He wanted to get rid of the outward forms that for him hide the Invisible and arrive at something that expressed with bare simplicity and directness some reality within. It is what made people begin to prefer the primitives to the developed art of the Renaissance. That is why he depreciates Botticelli as not giving the real thing, but only an outward grace and beauty which he considers vulgar in comparison with the less formal art of old that was satisfied with bringing out the pure emotion from within and nothing else. It is the same thing which makes him want a stark bare rocky directness for modern poetry.

To continue about Lawrence's poetry from where I stopped. The idea is to get rid of all over-expression, of language for the sake of language, or form for the sake of form, even of indulgence of poetic emotion for the sake of the emotion, because all that veils the thing in itself, dresses it up, prevents it from coming out in the seizing nudity of its truth, the power of its intrinsic appeal. There is a sort of mysticism here that wants to express the inexpressible, the concealed, the invisible—reduce expression to its barest bareness and you get nearer the inexpressible, suppress as much of the form as may be and you get nearer that behind which is invisible. It is the same impulse, as I have said, as pervaded recent endeavours in Art. Form hides, not expresses the reality; let us suppress the concealing form and express the reality by its appropriate geometrical figures—and you have cubism. Or since that is too much, suppress exactitude of form and replace it by more significant forms that indicate rather than conceal the truth—so you have "abstract" paintings. Or, what is within reveals itself in dreams, not in waking phenomena; let us have in poetry or painting the figures, visions, sequences, design of dreams—and you have surrealist art and poetry. The idea of Lawrence is akin: let us get rid of rhyme, metre, artifices which please us for their own sake and draw us away from the thing in itself, the real behind the form. So suppressing these things let us have something bare, rocky, primally expressive. There is nothing to find fault with in the theory provided it does lead to a new creation which expresses the inner truth in things better and more vividly and directly than with rhyme and metre the old poetry, now condemned as artificial and rhetorical, succeeded in expres-

sing it. But the results do not come up to expectation. Take the four lines of Lawrence*: in what do they differ from the old poetry except in having a less sure rhythmical movement, a less seizing perfection of language? It is a fine image and Keats or Thompson would have made out of it something unforgettable. But after reading these lines one has a difficulty in recalling any clear outline of image, any seizing expression, any rhythmic cadence that goes on reverberating within and preserves the vision for ever. What the modernist metreless verse does is to catch up the movements of prose and try to fit them into varying lengths and variously arranged lengths of verse. Sometimes something which has its own beauty or power is done—though nothing better or even equal to the best that was done before, but for the most part there is either an easy or a strained ineffectiveness. No footsteps hitting the earth! Footsteps on earth can be a walk, can be prose: the beats of poetry can on the contrary be a beat of wings. As for the bird image, well, there is more lapsing than flying in this movement. But where is the bareness, the rocky directness—where is the something more direct and real than any play of outer form can give? The attempt at colour, image, expression is just the same as in the old poetry—whatever is new and deep comes from Lawrence's peculiar vision, but could have been more powerfully expressed in a more close-knit language and metre.

Of course, it does not follow that new and free forms are not to be attempted or that they cannot succeed at all. But if they succeed it will be by bringing the fundamental quality, power, movement of the old poetry which is the eternal quality of all poetry—into new metrical and rhythmical discoveries and new secrets of poetic expression. It cannot be done by reducing these to skeletonic bareness or suppressing them by subdual and dilution in a vain attempt to unite the free looseness of prose with the gathered and intent paces of poetry.

Sri Aurobindo

* Just a few of the roses gathered by the Isar
Are fallen, and their blood-red petals on the cloth
Float like boats on a river, waiting
For a fairy wind to wake them from their sloth.

ELEMENTAL ORIGIN OF DECORATIVE FORMS

Nandalal Bose

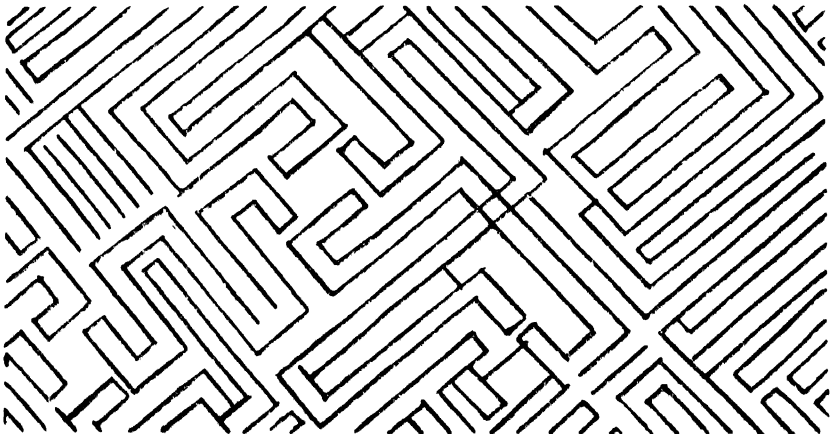
IN my notes on Ornamental Art, in previous numbers (Vol. I, Part I, II) of the Quarterly, I tried to show how the forms of natural objects—flowers, fruits, etc.—which have been used in our country for the purposes of decorative designing, could be reduced to certain typical shapes; adding the caution, however, that a mechanical insistence on these would tend to restrict creative variety, for the maintaining of which an ever-fresh study of nature is always needed.

Pursuing the analysis further, but keeping in mind the same truth that creation is an unfolding away from, and not a harking back to the origin, it has seemed to me that the various decorative designs may claim as their fundamental bases the forms of the Buddhist symbols for the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and sky.

I proceed to explain and illustrate my idea below.



First Element—Earth. The symbol for this is a cube, of which the two-dimensional aspect is a square. Of all the elements, earth does not depend for its shape on any extraneous support, and is therefore well represented by the cubical form. Arabesque or other patterns for being carved on or worked in stone are based on the cube which, as an emblem of solidity and permanence, affords a necessary frame for the representation of mobile objects.



Second Element—Water. The symbol for this is a sphere (in two dimensions, a circle). Water, unsupported, tends to form spherical drops. Its shape depends on external containers, or resistances. Its eddies due to contacts with earth are circular. The impact on it of air gives rise to wave forms. Being heavy as well as fluid, its lines of motion tend downward. All the forms so arising are to be found in scroll work.



Third Element—Fire. The symbol is a cone, or triangle, standing on its base, point upwards. This represents the shape of an undisturbed flame. Its interaction with air results in waves and eddies ; but as fire, unlike water, is devoid of weight, the lines of these forms have an upward tendency.



Fourth Element—Air. The symbol is a crescent, emblematic of the forms created by its motion over earth and water. It is fluid, but being invisible, it can only manifest form through its action on sand, dust, water, vapours, etc. Its eddies and waves are prominently displayed in cloud shapes. Ascending spirals are characteristic of its lightness.



Fifth Element—Sky. The symbol is egg-shell in shape—vaulted in each direction. The sky represents space itself, with no form of its own ; but being the condition of every form, is thus fittingly symbolised by a vault-like cavity. The spaces, within and around the lines of a design, are as necessary parts of its form as are the lines themselves, and find their prototype in this element.

LAUGHTER

A Chapter from the "*Diary of the Five Elements*" *

Rabindranath Tagore

A COLD morning in November. The palm-juice man is passing, hawking his drink. The morning mist has cleared, leaving the early sun to impart a comfortable warmth to the beginning of the day. Samir is imbibing a cup of tea. Khiti is looking at a newspaper. Vyom has just turned up, wrapped from neck to head in the folds of a lengthy and loud green-and-blue comforter, his lanky figure supported by an unwarrantably thick stick, and has limply subsided into his favourite chair.

In the distance, near the door, stand Deepti and Srotaswini, rocking with little gusts of laughter. Khiti and Samir have jumped to the conclusion that the placidly curled-up Vyom, muffled in multi-coloured wool, is the cause of the girls' merriment. The absent mind of Vyom himself has at length been roused to a consciousness of its surroundings.

Vyom turned his chair a little towards me saying: "The mere man may easily fall into the error that these girls are laughing about something funny, but that would be nothing but an illusion. Providence hasn't endowed male humanity with the faculty of laughing without reason,—what makes women laugh is understood not by gods nor men. The flint is naturally dark but sparks noisily when fitly struck: the diamond sparkles all the time, without awaiting any special occasion. Women weep with little cause, and laugh without any cause at all. The natural law of cause and effect applies only to menfolk."

Samir poured himself out some more tea, as he said: "Why women's laughter alone, all laughter as an outcome of humour seems inexplicable to me. We weep when grieved and laugh when pleased,—that is intelligible; but why should we laugh at what we call funny?"

* Khiti = Earth; Srotaswini = Water; Deepti = Fire; Samir = Air; Vyom = Ether. These are the "elements" whose meetings and discussions are recorded in this "Diary". Srotaswini and Deepti are supposed to belong to the feminine sex; the other three to the masculine sex.

That has hardly anything to do with pleasure. It is not pleasant to see a fat man tumble off a chair collapsing under him, but that appears to be a recognised occasion for laughter. Coming to think of it, it makes me wonder—”

“Oh, spare us, Samir !” exclaimed Khiti. “There are enough of obviously wonderful things,—finish with them first before you start thinking up things to wonder at. You remind me of a madcap who swept the top dust off his yard, and then raked up the surface to get rid of all the rest of it,—need I add that his enterprise was not crowned with success ? If you insist on digging for wonder-exciting things, your friends here will take it as notice to quit. Time may be long, but its whole length is not ours.”

“I can understand your disquiet, my dear fellow,” laughed Samir, “for by taking thought it may very well appear wonderful that the like of you should be. But no stretch of imagination can reach any likeness between me and your madcap.”

“Your pardon !” retorted Khiti, “the long-standing friendship with you which gave me that insight must be my excuse. Anyhow, what was the point ? Why do funny things make us laugh ? Wonderful indeed ! But what about the previous question : Why do we laugh at all ? When something that pleases us presents itself, why should odd noises proceed from our throat, and sundry grimaces result in a baring of our front teeth ? Surely it’s a grievous hurt to man’s dignity to be made to behave in this absurd fashion. The people of Europe are ashamed to show outward signs of fear or grief. We Easterners similarly shrink from a public exhibition of risibility—”

“That’s because we consider it to be so ridiculous,” interrupted Samir, “—fit only for children, and quite unbecoming their elders in society assembled. I once heard a comic song about Krishna, going of a morning, hookah in hand, to ask Radha for a piece of live coal to light it with. The picture is neither pretty nor pleasant ; if, then, we still laugh over it, how can such unseemly levity be approved by staid and sober men ? It seems to be a mere physical act, a reflex of some nerve irritation, which has nothing to do with our intelligence, sense of beauty, or even self-interest. So such automatic contortions, indicating a temporary dethronement of reason, must be adjudged unworthy of a rational creature.”

Khiti had apparently been lost in thought. “Right !” he now ejaculated. “Since it’s clear that there’s a distinction between what is droll and what is pleasant, the two should have been provided with

different forms of expression. But Nature is so inconsiderate in her housekeeping—in places we find superfluous waste, in others neglect of the needful. It wasn't proper of her to make a shift to contrive with laughter alone, in both cases."

"You are unjust to Nature," remarked Vyom. "We smile when pleased, but laugh out when our sense of humour is stirred. This may be compared to light and lightning in the physical world. One is the result of steady wave motion, the other of sudden friction. If we could discover why the same ether gives rise to these diverse phenomena, we could perhaps, by analogy, make out a distinction between the two kinds of laughter."

Samir ignored Vyom and went on: "The excitation of our sense of humour doesn't exactly result in pleasure, but rather in a low degree of pain. Or, perhaps, I should say that any impact of slight pain or discomfort on our consciousness gives us a pleasurable sensation. There's no fun in eating the usual food cooked by our everyday cook, but when, at a picnic, we've taken all kinds of trouble to get together an untimely meal, may be of indigestible stuff, we claim to have had a great time. Such self-inflicted trouble gives a pleasant fillip to our consciousness. What we call fun, whether sportive or humorous, is this kind of pleasure-giving torment. The spectacle of Krishna presenting himself, pining for his morning smoke, at the door of Radha's kitchen, gives a blow to our usual conception of them. It's slightly painful, but the irritation is regulated down to a degree of which the reaction is pleasurable. If this degree had been exceeded, then we should have been annoyed, not pleased. If, in the course of a devotional recital about Krishna and Radha, such a conceit had been introduced, the shock would have been too violent, and the singer greeted not with laughter, but with fisticuffs. So I say that the comic effect and its resulting merriment are due to a mildly painful impact on our consciousness. That is why genuine pleasure raises a smile, while the kind of shock given by a joke starts an explosion of cackling laughter."

"Once you fellows get hold of a theory," complained Khiti, "and manage to tack on metaphors to your taste, you're so overjoyed, that truth ceases to count. You know well enough that we don't always laugh aloud at humour, but sometimes smile, even merely an inward smile. Anyhow, that's only a side issue. The real point was that drollery acts as a mild stimulus, and such stimulation gives our mind pleasure. Ridden as we are, within and without, by reason and its laws, we form regular habits of mind and normal expectations, along

which our consciousness flows so smoothly, that we're hardly aware of it. When into this even current there's a sudden intrusion of the odd, the discrepant, our mind bubbles up in amusement ; such obtrusion isn't necessarily pleasant or beautiful or useful, nor, on the other hand, must it be positively painful. So I agree that humour is a case of excitation pure and simple."

"Yes," I said, "the rousing of consciousness is by itself pleasurable, provided it's not of grave sorrow or loss. A certain degree of fear is pleasant, if there be no real apprehension of danger. Children love to have their hearts going pit-a-pat on being told ghost stories. The separation of Sita from Rama grieves us ; Othello's groundless jealousy torments us ; old king Lear's lament at his daughters' ingratitude pains us. But, if these feelings hadn't been roused in us, we'd have put no value on such pieces of literature. We rather give the higher place to tragedy, for the thrill of sorrow is of a larger amplitude. The unexpected tap of the comic or jocular simply serves to stir up our stagnant consciousness. Some such idea, perhaps, inclines certain people to offer a sudden slap on the back as a humorous effort, and others to employ personal abuse as substitute for wit."

"Friends !" cried Khiti. "For goodness' sake stop. The subject has been almost done to death, and our nerves tormented beyond the limit of pleasant excitement. We've all understood, I'm sure, that comedy and tragedy differ only in degree of painfulness—"

"Quite," added Vyom. "Just as the snow sparkles when the sunlight first falls on it, but melts if the sun keeps on shining. Give me off-hand the names of some comedies and tragedies and I undertake to prove—"

At this point Deepti and Srotaswini came towards us, not altogether recovered from their spell of laughing. "What were you stalwarts struggling to prove ?" inquired Deepti.

"We're proving," replied Khiti, "that the subject of your laughter is wrapt in mystery."

The girls looked meaningly at each other and went off into renewed silvery peals.

Vyom said: "I was about to prove that in comedies the small sufferings of other people make us laugh, and in tragedies the large sufferings of other people make us weep."

Whereat their spasms of mirth became so uncontrollable that the girls had to leave the room, abashed ; and the other masculine "elements" were reduced to smiling silence.

Samir at length ventured: "Look here, Vyom, the day is fairly advanced. I don't think the unwinding of those checkered snake-coils from your head and neck would do you any harm."

Khiti cast a quizzical glance at the bludgeon which served Vyom for a walking stick. "Does this qualify you for tragedy, or only comedy?"—he asked.

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On receiving a copy of the last chapter of our diary, Deepti wrote to me: One fine morning Srotaswini and I had a good laugh—a memorable morning, a thrice-wondrous laugh! Women's laughter gurgles forth because their nature is river-like, but that seems to make some men weep, some take to rhyming, and others jump off precipices. Now I see, ours has made old wisdom spout up in the brains of young philosophers. I must confess to a preference for the first three manifestations.—With which preamble Deepti proceeded to demolish all our conclusions arrived at on the last occasion.

I have firstly to remark that it is not open to Miss Deepti to object to lack of coherence in our discussion, for the foremost effect of women's laughter is to turn men's heads. Secondly, if the girls could not have imagined that we would philosophise about their frivolity, neither could we imagine that they would hunt for logic in our philosophy.

Newton claimed to have been gathering pebbles on the shore of wisdom. We only play there at building castles of sand. To get whiffs of bracing sea air is really our game. We bring back no gems of thought, but only vigour of mind; and I cannot admit that the former are superior. Gems may have flaws, but health has no degrees. What if our conclusions are not final, have we not enjoyed the ideas coursing through our brains? But I will not labour the point, for that would be against our rules, which enjoin only movement, easy and rapid movement to and fro, within our subject.

Anyhow, it is for me to sum up. Our question was: While there are, properly, tears for sorrow and smiles for joy, what about the incongruity of laughter for humour? Other animals feel grief and pleasure, but they have no sense of humour. There may be a trace of it in the monkey, but then there are so many resemblances between monkeys and men.

The rational animal, man, should have resented that which does not conform to reason,—but why should it make him laugh? We

suggested that fun and humour are of the same nature, both depending on a moderately painful excitation of our consciousness, due to some divergence from the usual, the expected. One of the objections raised in Deepti's letter was, that if we four philosophers were right, why do we not see the fun of a sudden stumble when going over level ground?—This, however, does not contradict but merely limits our conclusion. It shows that only a certain class of excitation makes for humour. There is no harm in trying to find out the characteristics of this class, even though our success may not be complete.

Matter by itself does not excite emotion. When a large stone falls upon and crushes a small stone, that does not cost us a tear. If, walking over a plain, we unexpectedly come upon a hill standing out of it, we do not meet it with a smile. Laughter and tears, therefore, have to do with the actions or reactions of sentient creatures. Oddity, queerness, and the ludicrous in general are, similarly, not attributes of matter, but imply voluntary activity.

A bad smell in a clean-looking place does not strike us as a departure from the normal,—we are, rather, certain that there is something rotten hidden somewhere, for dead matter is invariably expected to act according to its laws. But if, in a public street, we come across a venerable old man cutting silly capers, that is a real case of discrepancy between fact and expectation, for it is not the outcome of any immutable law, but of some fantastic whim, to which the old gentleman could as well have refrained from giving vent. It is because of their inevitableness that an unexpected stumble or stench do not excite laughter. Matter is as non-humorous as it is unmoral.

Seraj-ud-Daulah is said to have delighted in tying together the beards of two solemn persons and then putting snuff in their nose to make them sneeze. The discrepancy between the resulting centrifugal and centripetal tendencies seems to have appealed to his humour. This, however, could not have proved at all laughable to the victims. In all discrepancies,—between the desire and the event, the means and the end, promise and performance,—there is an element of cruelty. Khiti was right when he said that the difference between comedy and tragedy was one of degree of pain. Both are based on discrepancies. But while the case of Falstaff and the merry dames of Windsor makes us laugh, that of Rama and Sita makes us weep, though in both there is just the discrepancy between what was hoped for and what actually happened.

So it seems we must divide discrepancies into two classes,—

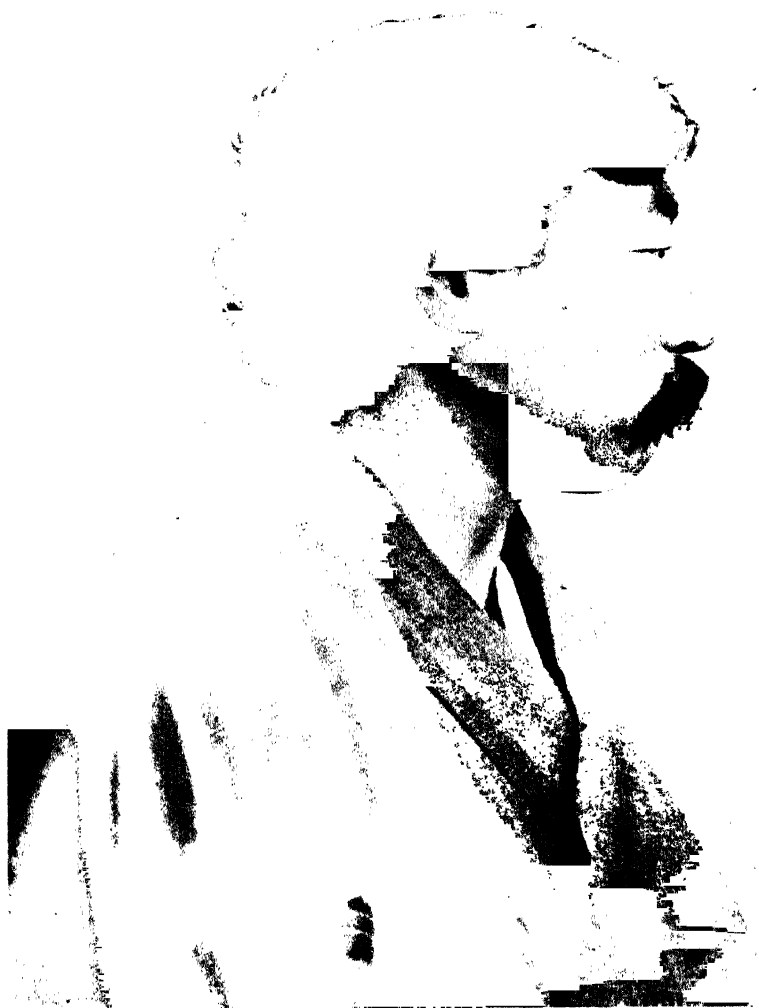
laughable and deplorable. Those which affect only the surface of our consciousness tickle us, but those which strike deeper move us.

When a sportsman, after taking prolonged aim, fires at what he took to be a wild goose, but turns out on a nearer approach to be some old newspaper sticking out of the ground, his disgust provokes us to crack jokes. But when a man, after a strenuous, life-long pursuit of something he deemed to be of supreme value, discovers when he has at length got it, that it is a worthless delusion, his despair evokes our sympathy.

No one looks upon the spectacle of people dying of famine as anything but tragic, but we can imagine a humorous Satan finding it mightily comic that creatures who boast of their Six Systems of Philosophy, their Valmiki and Kalidasa, their legion of gods and goddesses, should be thrown into agony of soul for want of a few mouthfuls of rice.

In a word, when the degree of discrepancy is progressively intensified, its tone rises from surprise to amusement, from amusement to pathos.





KAKUZO OKAKURA

KAKUZO OKAKURA

Some Reminiscences by Surendranath Tagore

STRANGELY enough, considering the inestimable gift of his friendship that marked it, my recollections of the period when Okakura was with us take shape only as disconnected pictures, much after the fashion of Alice's adventures in Wonderland. As this is clearly not due to any waning of love, for all the decades that have passed since he left us, the reason must be that the emanations of his personality were too subtle to have become particularly associated with any sayings, doings, or events.

It was due to some whim of Sister Nivedita, of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda as she loved to call herself, that I found myself at a party given by a Norwegian lady-devotee of Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Olé Bull, whom we remember as an embodiment of gracious gentleness, and to whom Nivedita was as a somewhat wilful daughter. We were invited there to meet the guest of honour, Okakura Kakuzo,* of the elite of Japan, founder of the Nippon Bijitsu-in academy of the neo-Japanese school of Art, who had just finished writing his masterpiece, *The Ideals of the East*, and was paying his first visit to India.

My first impression of him is still vivid. Seated by our hostess was a sturdy figure of medium height, clad in a black silk *kimono* on which was printed or embroidered his family crest, a simple white flower of five petals. In his hand was a bamboo-and-paper fan, decorated with a sprig of foliage done in sepia, and on his feet were Japanese cloth socks and grass sandals. His face was more of Chinese than Japanese type, with heavy eyelids and spare moustache, but his complexion was ruddy. He sat at ease, with a profound gravity of expression, incessantly smoking Egyptian cigarettes.

Okakura himself was silent, but was being vigorously talked to, chiefly by Nivedita, who was transparently anxious to draw him out for our benefit. But all her complimentary references,—either to himself, or to his country, then coming into the lime-light, or to his book, the manuscript of which Nivedita, to her great delight, had been privileged to peruse,—served but to elicit from him a low bow of acknowledgment.

* According to the Japanese custom the family name is placed first and the personal name comes after. So far as I remember, the name Kakuzo signifies a combination of the three qualities : suavity, fortitude, and harmony.

After a while Okakura disappeared, and I was about to take my leave, supposing the function to be over, when Nivedita came up with a mysterious air, asking me to step into an adjoining room. Passing through the indicated door, I entered a small glazed verandah, furnished only with a table and two chairs, in one of which sat Okakura, still smoking, as imperturbably grave as before. Though I was considerably his junior, and moreover immature even for my age, he greeted me as an equal with a courteous bow, motioned me to the chair beside him, and gracefully offered me a cigarette on the open palm of his hand ; whereupon I made the discovery that he had a whole tin of them in one of the capacious sleeves of his *kimono*.

Okakura spoke English with a halting accent, as though at a loss for the right word which, however, he always managed to find. "What are you thinking of doing for your country ?" came his first abrupt question. It took me completely by surprise, for I had no inkling of what I afterwards suspected, that Nivedita, out of her elder-sisterly regard, had charged him to stir us all up. Unprepared as I was for such a talk, I rambled on in reply, trying, or thinking I was trying, to convey to him how handicapped we were for making any organised attempt for the betterment of our country, and I still remember how feeble I felt in at length arriving at my lame conclusion that, as matters stood, the only thing was for each one of us to do his little bit, leaving the cumulative effect to time.

Having heard me out in silence, Okakura remarked that it saddened him to note the tone of despondency in our youths,—this apparently being not the first time some such reply had been given to him. Then he warmed up as he proceeded to describe the very different atmosphere in which he had been brought up ; and for me the first smile flickered over his features as he recounted an incident of his early childhood when, hearing sounds of altercation in the next room, he peeped through a chink to find the headless trunk of his uncle still in a sitting posture, the arteries of his neck spurting fountains of blood ! Thus passed our first meeting,—also the last in which he wore for me that mask of portentous gravity.

Then occurs a complete blank. I cannot at all recollect even seeing Okakura again in Calcutta, much less how or why I happened to come into the next picture that my memory presents to me, of the two of us seated on a spacious verandah of the Mohant's guest-house at Budh Gaya. Okakura is still smoking, but this time one of those semi-

porous little earthenware hookahs in which the water keeps delightfully cool. He is far from grave, but beams on me, for I am his guest, he in turn being the guest of the Mohant.

It was then summer, and when, after a breakfast in Anglo-Jap style, we returned to our seats on the verandah, the sun blazed fiercer and fiercer, till the dry atmosphere outside seemed to be on fire. An old Japanese priest, who also was staying with Okakura, finding the furnace-like blasts from his fan to be worse than useless, kept pulling out from his sleeve, and glancing at a little Japanese thermometer, which was marked to register only up to 108° F. When the mercury rose beyond that point, he gave way to despair, and retired under a blanket, moaning something that sounded like "too hot, too hot !" As befitting my Indian birth, I am on good terms with the Sun-god ; and so also proved to be Okakura, of the Land of the Rising Sun, albeit he had never before encountered anything like the power of our upper-Indian luminary at its height. So we sat out the day in the verandah, Okakura proceeding, over his hookah, to acquaint me with the reason for his being there.

He had originally come, he told me, simply to make his offering of reverence to the Buddha, but far from being rewarded with peace of mind, he had been sorely distressed at the state of the temple and its ill-kept surroundings. Thereupon he had a vision of little colonies of devotees, hailing from all parts of the world, each housed according to the usage of its own land, all clustering round the temple grounds, contributing colourful variety of vesture and ceremonial to a common ideal of peace and good-will, inspired by the constant contemplation of the site of the Master's enlightenment. With his proneness to plunge right into the middle of things, nothing would serve Okakura but to make a start on one such colony here and now, with a grant of land obtained from the Mohant, of which his companion, the old priest, would be left in charge till the first batch of pilgrims could be sent along ! A mutual friend had arranged for Okakura's stay in this guest house till the requisite formalities could be put through.

When at length we secured an interview, the Mohant, whom we found ensconced in a little tiled hut, on the roof of his palace, in keeping with his hermit pose, graciously accepted Okakura's presents, offered with a profound obeisance, and professed to be delighted to welcome a distinguished representative of great Japan. But when I, as interpreter, explained the nature of Okakura's prayer, the Mohant avowed himself utterly helpless, for the British District Officer, he was

sure, would not hear of any transfer of land to an Asiatic alien ; and of how to approach the higher authorities for sanction he had not the least notion. So it was good-bye to Okakura's dream of high artistic collective worship, worthy of the Budh-Gaya shrine.

The next jump my memory takes is into a house near by ours, in which Okakura is staying for the time. He is busy writing his next book on the Awakening of Asia, at which he works all day, sprawling over a bolster on his bedstead ; while we spend wildly exhilarating evenings, sitting round his table, listening to his glowing passages deploring the White Disaster spreading over the East, in its intellectual and spiritual surrender to the western cult of Mammon. Okakura would invite, nay, insist on our criticism, and appeared gratefully to incorporate such harsher word or blatant epigram as any of us thought fit to suggest.

It may seem passing strange to any reader of Okakura's, that we should have had no qualms about disturbing the flow of his marvellous sentences, so restrained, and yet so tensely expressive. I can only plead how incredibly immature we were, how heady was our new-found enthusiasm, how thoroughly we had been made to feel that our wonderful friend was just one of us ! I remember my mystification, later, at finding none of these "improvements" in the book as eventually published—rather it seemed several shades toned down. Looking back on our pranks of that period, I am assailed with more than a suspicion that it was *our* awakening that the astute Okakura was really after.

Then we are travelling, Okakura to have a look round India, I as his guide.—And what a guide !

Armed with directions how to get to the site of Nalanda, we obtained the loan of a small elephant from a local zamindar, contriving to stay on its bare, sloping back by clinging to a rope stretched from neck to tail. Thus we did a cross-country ride of about 30 miles, over hill and down dale, alternately wetted by the rain when it chose to shower, and broiled by the sun when it chose to shine ; I making futile inquiry, in my best Calcutta Hindi, of every gaping Behari rustic we met. The one thing we did not do was to arrive at any place remotely resembling the ruins of a University. Okakura, in his innocence, was unable to imagine that the Hindi of an educated son of Hind could be anything but luminously clear, so his only comment was, that if this

was the type of subject King Suddhodana had to rule over, no wonder Prince Siddharta felt a distaste for the world !

Our strenuous pursuit of Nalanda University gave Okakura a touch of fever, which made me hurry him off to my nearest friend, accessible by railway, for a short rest. It was all I could do to keep from laughing out, to see the look on my friend's face as I introduced my companion ; for Okakura had thought fit to adopt, as travelling costume, a cloak and hood he had designed, with the help of a Chinese print and a Calcutta tailor, to represent the garb of a Taoist monk, and weird is not the word for its effect in his present surroundings ! Anyhow, my friend plied his guest with invalid diet and stimulants, but our patient had no faith in milk, or broth, or wine, as restoratives. Rice gruel, he said, was the recognised pick-me-up after fever, in Japan ; and when Okakura had made some with soft-boiled rice stirred in hot water, and swallowed a tumbler-full, he felt himself again, ready to resume our journey.

On we go Westwards, making little halts on the way to see friends rather than places, and whenever we are sighted by inquisitive travellers, I am taken aside and importuned as to the whence, why, and whither of my mysterious friend in the cowl, till I get quite callous to being patently disbelieved when I state that it is nothing but a far-Easterner on pleasure bent.

Okakura's travelling equipment was of the simplest. Apart from Japanese expanding cane trunks for his clothes,—comprising any number of cotton *kimonos*, to be worn one or more at a time according to the weather, and washed at every halt,—he had a large bag of strong cloth tied with a cord running through the top, inside of which were any number of small bags, distinguished by their colours, for holding toilet articles, writing implements, painting brushes and pigments, and even fishing tackle, in addition to sundry artistic knick-knacks suitable as presents to friends made on the way. For his bed he had a strip of grass matting laid over the railway bunk.

Okakura regaled me on the way with humorous anecdotes of his Chinese travels. He had wandered, to give just one sample, into some interior village and, having a letter to send, made his way to the post office to get it stamped and posted. The Chinese post master, sitting on a bench outside, on perceiving a new-comer, began by asking his age. Learning that Okakura was senior, he at once kow-towed, invited him inside, and begged him, as his elder brother, to consider

the post office and everything in it as his very own. The post master then passed a genial hour or more in complimentary inquiries after the welfare of his august visitor, his people at home, and his and their concerns in general. When at long last, Okakura succeeded in steering the conversation round to the business in hand, the poor post master was in despair. Stamps ? He had long run out of them and had no idea when the next stock would arrive, or any messenger be available to take off the letter.

Okakura also occasionally touched on art matters. I remember his telling me of the souls of trees which revealed themselves to worshipful meditating artists, but not to those who treated them merely as belonging to a species. His remarks on the *feeling* of the lines of certain stone arches, went, I am afraid, rather over my head. He would often rely on gesture alone, showing me some view that pleased him through a frame made by the tips of his forefingers brought together, indicating the direction with a bow and a smile. This reminds me of an occasion when a Bengali artist whose work Okakura admired, brought along an unfinished drawing for his advice. Okakura said nothing, but simply laid two match-sticks, at an angle, on a corner of the sketch, whereupon the artist said that the nature of the defect which had been puzzling him was now revealed, as well as the way to its remedy.

In Bombay Okakura caught sight of a Japanese steamer moored alongside one of the dock wharves. This roused in him a longing to give me a taste of *sake*, which for the Japanese has all kinds of associations and ceremonial uses, apart from its merits as a drink,—and also to lay in a stock for himself. What if the stuff was not allowed to be brought off the ship ?—It would have to be smuggled out ! Okakura made me put on an overcoat with large pockets, his *kimono* being equal to any great-coat in that respect. Thus accoutred we boarded the vessel. As the captain and officers came up with inquiry written over their faces, my friend made a step forward and, with a slight inclination of his head, simply uttered the name Okakura, whereupon they all bent double, hands on knees, murmuring compliments with a sharp intake of the breath, to the effect (as I afterwards gathered) : “ Grass ! grass !—as grass under your feet ! ” The courtesies done, our errand explained, bottles of *sake* produced with smiles, and stowed away in my pockets and Okakura’s sleeves, we landed, laden with contraband, and made our way back in the dusk, unmolested by any Customs official.

Of all the fare provided by our hotel, Okakura took a fancy

to Bombay-duck, a kind of crisply baked, dry-fish. So when we resumed our travels northwards, he took a hamper of the raw material along, to serve as a corrective for the dullness of dak-bungalow cookery. I soon managed to get used to the penetrating aroma exhaled by the basket under our seat, but our fellow passengers apparently could not, for we were left severely alone to ourselves and our Bombay-ducks so long as they lasted.

It would hardly add to the picture for me to worry out further details of our travel. As was only to be expected, Okakura was immensely impressed with the profusion of creative design found all over the Abu Temples. He was mightily taken with a stone frieze of frolicsome elephants to see the lightness with which the artist had touched his ponderous subjects. His *samurai* heart went out at once to the Sikhs of the Golden Temple, and of the *kripan*-cult. We did the Taj Mahal by moonlight, paid our respects at Akbar's tomb, and felt how uncomfortable it must have been to live in Fatehpur Sikri, for all its architectural embellishments. In entering any temple, Okakura went bare-foot, wearing a *dhoti* in Indian fashion,—for him all shrines were to be approached with reverence.

But what chiefly remains engraved in my memory is, how smoothly Okakura glided into the landscape of the remote Bengal village where our journey came to its end,—his Taoist robes striking no discordant note in the province of the *aul* and the *baul*. To see him sauntering about the little markets and fairs, along the river and by the temple,—dwelling not on the glory faded from the exhausted land, but on the beauty yet lingering in the features, the customs, the handicrafts of its people,—made me realise how it had proved so easy for the Chinese travellers of old, who came with love in their hearts, to gain intimacy with Indian life. For his part, Okakura said, little Bengali mannerisms and appliances revealed to him the meaning of many an obscure element in the Buddhist rites as practised in Japan.

The last scene of this visit of Okakura's that comes before me, is the tender care he is taking of the weeping Nivedita, utterly beside herself on the passing away of her Master, Swami Vivekananda. Okakura was no more of a mystic than an artist needs must be,—at least he had no other-worldly consolations to offer. Nevertheless some charm in his sympathetic silences apparently worked on the highly-strung Nivedita with greater potency than the words of wisdom poured on her by her fellow-disciples,—bringing her peace.

Our first parting had nothing of melancholy in it. Okakura talked of an early return to India ; I looked forward to a chance of soon going over to Japan. My visit to Japan, however, never came off, though Okakura did come back.

Okakura's second and last visit materialised years later.

So impatient was I, I could not wait till his steamer, a Japanese tramp, came to rest at its moorings in the dock, but clambered on board by a knotted rope hanging over its side, while the vessel was still moving along the wharf,—just managing to miss falling foul of the authorities.

With Okakura's smile mingled a trace of surprise at my sudden appearance on deck. "Still the same !" was his greeting. But, alas, I could not feel that of him. His bow was there, his smile was there, but there was also an impalpable difference, as of some shadow fallen over him,—perhaps of the illness with which he was already stricken, fated to be his last, though then we knew it not.

This time he was with us only a short while, as completely one of us as he had ever been, going about with me seeing old friends, reviving old memories,—but always there was the difference.

At the end we are seated alone together in the railway restaurant, half-an-hour before Okakura's train is due to start. For the first time I see him depressed. He is toying with the food before him, hardly eating anything. "Are you not feeling well ?"—I ask him, none too cheerful myself. He looks up at me with a mournful smile. "Can't you understand ?" is all he says.

Shortly after came the news of his death abroad, but not before his parting presents had arrived for my mother and sister, whom he also called Mother and Didimani (sister-jewel, in Bengali). We, however, never think of him as lost to us.

MOSLEM CALLIGRAPHY

M. Ziauddin

III

Naskh and other Styles

OF the two main off-shoots or elementary styles of the original Arabic script, viz. the cursive and the angular, the latter, because of its monumental character, came to be selected as the preferred script of the government. And, in obedience to the general tendency in art during the period of Arab predominance, the calligraphist too tried his best to bring out its ornamental possibilities. This script, that is, the angular Kufic, had absorbed the attention of the artists to the almost complete neglect of the cursive variety, until in its progress on ornamental lines, it departed so far away from its original structure that it failed to serve its primary purpose as the script of a language.

In the meanwhile, the common cursive variety of the Kufic continued to be used for common and less artistic purposes—for the copying of books of common use and correspondence, where lack of embellishment was not of much consequence. After about three centuries of monopoly as the preferred script of the Moslem world, the Kufic lost its ground. For about two centuries more it was used, almost exclusively, for ornamental purposes and then became obsolete. The round variety, which had been developing unnoticed, under the long shadow of the lordly Kufic, came to be recognised as the script of the State. It was given the distinctive name of Naskh. It had incorporated into itself all those orthographical improvements that had been worked out in the Kufic, and appeared on the stage of art fully dressed with vowel-marks, punctuation and diacritical signs.

The advent of the Naskh style brought in an important period of renaissance in the history of Moslem calligraphy. So far the Kufic had been mostly cultivated not so much for its own sake as for the decorative scheme to which it lent itself so easily. The script had become subservient to an ulterior motive, the decoration of a surface. With the Naskh appeared the tendency to realize the grace latent in the script itself; that is, the writing, and not the ornamental rhythm it could display, became the object of calligraphy. It was realized, in strong reaction to the ornamental Kufic, that the artist must remain

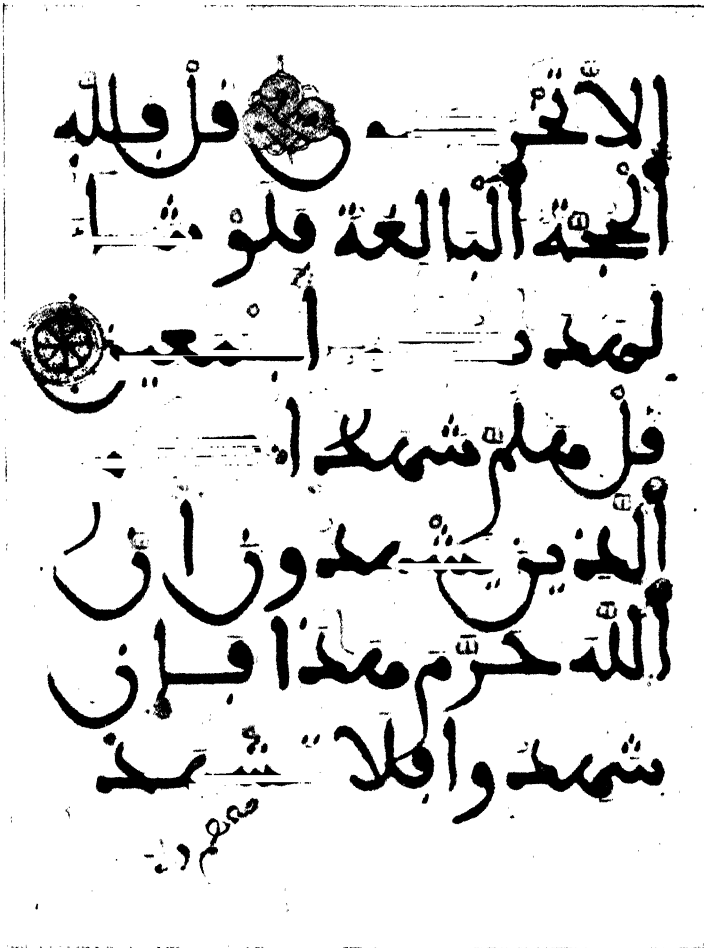


Fig. 91.

A specimen of the early Naskh, developing out of the round variety of the Kufic, which marked the period of transition from the Kufic to the Naskh.

faithful to the genuine features of the script ; he must not violate the original form of his script.

But a script has no original character inasmuch as it is not a natural object. One can never be sure of being quite faithful to the



Fig. 92.

A page from a Koran MS. of the XIII century.

original form, which form, if it ever had one at the moment of its birth, has been lost beyond recovery. A script is an invention of man, an artificial means of expressing an idea ; a purely intellectual contrivance. This, however, does not seem to be the view the calligraphist holds on the matter. To him his script is a living thing and, as such, though it undergoes changes as it grows and becomes more and more aged, it always has some features, peculiar to its age, which are its genuine features and people know it by those features. The calligraphist watches its growth in the hands of the people. And to this living medium of his art he wishes to remain faithful. And yet, if the artist were to simply copy the script as he has received it from the hands of the masses he would not be faith-

ful to his profession, and would not be doing his job. He must make the writing look beautiful. To attain this purpose he must change, however slightly, the proportions of strokes and curves that go to make the features of his script.

This the calligraphist does by taking into account the tendencies that are working towards the gradual change of the script and by taking into confidence the fancy of his readers. That is, he changes the forms of his letters after their liking. He follows the way the masses of his readers are sure to appreciate. By modifying the form of letters he makes them simpler of execution. He changes angles into rounder curves and lets strokes follow the natural sweep of the hand. Thus, while the identity of the letter is not lost, the writing is made easier, more to the taste of the readers and beautiful. In

bringing about a change of this nature, the calligraphist depends more upon the change of the proportion of curves and strokes than on any thing else. By changing these proportions he gives different expressions to letters without interfering with the outlines of their anatomy, their orthography.

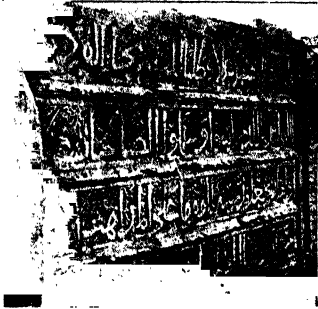


Fig. 93.

Naskh inscription carved at
Mustansiriyyah, Baghdad.

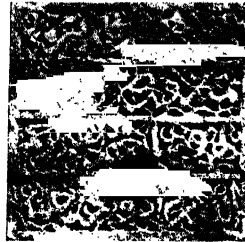


Fig. 94.

Naskh inscription carved
in stone, Baghdad.



Fig. 95.

Fragment of a Naskh
inscription carved in
stone, Baghdad

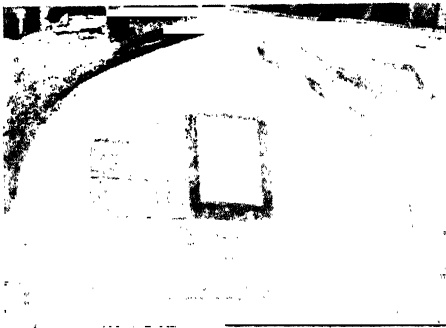


Fig. 96.

Naskh inscription at Khan Artmah,
Baghdad.

Through a gradual change in the artistic as well as the utilitarian improvement of the script, scores of newer styles developed. Most of them were lost as they did not develop into styles of any marked distinction and stable value, or because they were products of pure fancy and served no useful purpose. Many of them were nothing more than ingenious, and their ornamental merits did not suit the utility

of art. It was this defect which had proved suicidal in the case of the ornamental Kufic. The calligraphist never risked his art that way again. For the display of ingenuity and ornamental fancy, he had to take recourse to certain styles that were set apart for this purpose, viz. the Gulzar, the Tughra, the Ta'us and the Zulf-i-'urus, etc. From the Kufic down to Nasta'liq—the latest and the simplest of styles—the tendency has been from the complicated and angular to the more



Fig. 97.

A page from the *Masnawi* of Jalaluddin Rumi, in decorative
Nas'ih, XV century, Persia.

round. Only in the special ornamental and monumental styles the calligraphist indulges in ingenuity and complication.

The ideal of a calligraphist, like that of the adepts in other arts, was to express an emotion, which he strove to realize through the medium of the linear rhythm that his script was capable of producing. While every man and woman can walk, only a few of them can walk elegantly; any one might be able to write but few can make letters dance with grace.

The charm of a calligraphic writing is contained in the structure of strokes and curves which aim at producing a graceful movement instinct with universal appeal. A painter by his keen study of



Fig. 98.

Calligraphic drawing of a Persian lady, XV century, Persia.

expressions portrays in human faces joy, grief, anger, peace, or disgust by making use of certain lines that are suggestive of such emotions. A line, by its nature, is symbolic of a movement, of a particular rhythm abstracted from a natural object. A calligraphist selects a particular kind of line which he feels would produce the desired suggestion. His success depends upon the successful execution of the theme of his rhythm. Styles in calligraphy differ from each other in the styles of rhythm they convey.

Calligraphists succeeded so much in catching the spirit of the rhythm of life in their writing that painters, particularly of the fifteenth century, adopted the technique of the calligraphist for their art.



Fig. 99.

and seems to be full with the property of life. A line of this or a similar description has been defined by Mr. Huges as a 'beauty-line'; and a calligraphist selects this kind of line for his writing. The example of the 'beauty line' that Mr. Huges has given is similar to the two lines running horizontally in the middle of the plate shown above (Fig. 99).

This drawing on a glazed plate is calligraphic inasmuch as it symbolizes the rhythm of the growth of a luxuriant plant. It represents the dance of vegetable life, the dream of a plant. Lines used in this drawing are similar to those used in the ink-drawing of a Persian lady (Fig. 98). They suggest, apart from their

In a human drawing of calligraphic nature (Fig. 98), lines are suggestive of a joyous play of the moulding outlines of the human body. Without taking the help of shades, a line by gradually growing to a suitable breadth towards the centre, in the form of a muscle or a muscle fibre, suggests the roundness of a limb



Fig. 100.
Shikasta-amiz style, calligraphed by
S. Muhammad Da'ud al-Husaini.

subject, a particular rhythm of life, a more or less abstract way of representing an emotion. The beauty and the rhythm that a calligraphist strives to realize is similar to these drawings but much more abstract in subject.

Dr. Upham Pope, rightly ascribing to calligraphy the perfection that ink-drawing had attained in Persia, observes: ". . . The Persians'

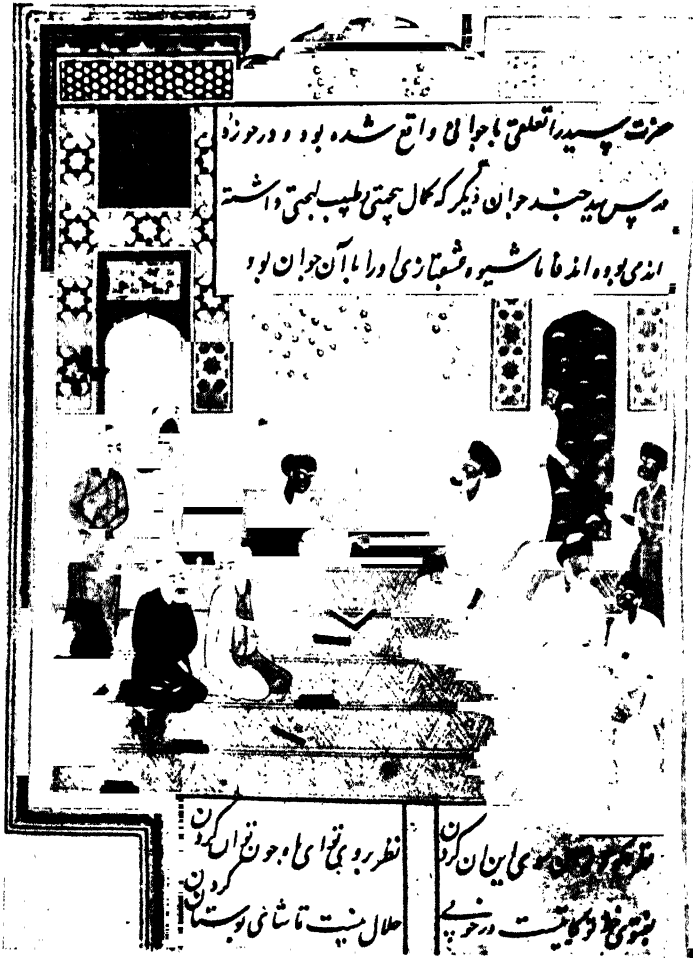


Fig. 101.

love for finess and their enthusiasm for technical elegance, their long-disciplined and instructed sense for the flowing line learned from calligraphy, were among the several influences that converged to carry the art of drawing to a very high rank. . . . Some of the fifteenth century drawings of the Herat school are essentially compositions in calli-



Fig. 102.

graphic strokes, and each line is endowed with a lovely and expressive grace that could only have been the product of a sophisticated passion for calligraphy.”¹

Another factor which we must take into account is the influence of the Chinese and the Manichæan or the Central-Asian art on both the calligraphy and painting of Persia. In Central-Asian art line-drawing of calligraphic style had reached its perfection, long before the Persians began to experiment in it. Such drawings appear in Persia with the invasions of Mongols and Turks. These people were

1. An Introduction to Persian Art, p. 115.



Fig. 103.

An ivory panel carved with a Naskh inscription XV century, Cairo.

familiar with the Chinese ink-drawings in Buddhist temples, and also with Chinese calligraphy done in frescoes on temple walls, on silk and

porcelain. China silk and porcelain, however, had entered Persia earlier than the invasions of the Mongols.¹

To return to calligraphy proper, I wish to point out that apart from the main styles that developed as off-shoots of Naskh, every master, in whatever style he wrote, had an individual style of his own. As a student of calligraphy strove to imitate his model, his practice, in case he had talent, developed into an improved style. Such individual artists provide us with innumerable styles within styles, infinite shades of emotion and qualities. It is often difficult to detect such individual variations. While we may feel them it is not always possible to lay our finger on the subtle distinctions.

In order to develop a particular trait in his style, an artist



Fig. 104.

A model of Nasta'liq calligraphy, by Shamsuddin; crescent circles of two adjoining words are made to merge into one.

makes the most of his energies both physical and mental. He might

1. *Islamic Culture*, Jan. 1931, p. 40; Oct. p. 64.

strive to make his handwriting firm and bold, expressive of strength, or rough, or austere, or exquisitely delicate, graceful and sweet. Whatever be the nature of the conscious attempt of the artist at bringing out a particular shade of character, it must be admitted that most of his distinctive qualities are the result of the stress his subconscious mind has on his art. His peculiarities reflect his personality, his mental character, which discipline and practice bring out in fine shades. It is extremely difficult to point out such mental qualities of a writing with any degree of precision, much less to analyze them. Analysis of the handwriting of a master would amount to the analysis

of his mind which is always baffling.

Today we do not possess that passion which older generations had for a good handwriting ; and we have no idea what amount of labour is required in mastering a stroke that might pass as fairly good. Consequently, we do not possess any real criterion with which we might be able to judge a work of calligraphy. We lack that sympathy which comes through practical acquaintance with the art. We might greatly admire a writing but our admiration is bound to be superficial, because it is of the uninitiated in the art. We cannot but overlook many good points of merit which personal touch with the pen can alone reveal.



Fig. 105.

A model for exercise in Nasta'liq calligraphy, by Shamsuddin, showing the symmetrical arrangement of similar strokes.

The Naskh style holds a mediate position between the Kufic and the Nasta'liq. The Naskh retains, however slightly, the suggestion of its angular origin ; its curves are never perfectly round or oval which

is the peculiarity of the Nasta'liq. The stages which the Naskh passed in its development towards Nasta'liq, are marked by such styles as Suls, and Riqua'. The Naskh in itself represents the cursive Kufic softened to broader curves and freer sweeps. Fragments of the papyri published in the *Archiv Orientali* for Oct. 1935, will at a glance convince us that what was called Naskh was in fact the cursive variety of the Kufic in its developed form. It usurped the hieratic position of the Kufic and has retained it since then. The Koran is never written in Nasta'liq hand. Nasta'liq is peculiar to the Persian and the Indian. Naskh is mostly used by Arabic speaking people.

Naskh developed different forms in different countries. The one known generally as Maghribi, i. e. 'the Western', is the earliest variety and

is drawn directly from the Kufic of the 3rd century A. H., independent of the later Naskh styles. This Maghribi variety of the Arabic script, was originally known as Qairwani, Qairwan being the name of the capital of the Aghlabids (800-909 A. D.). This town was the centre of the then civilized Africa and from here this first Naskh or the first variation of the cursive Kufic spread in its neighbourhood.¹



Fig. 106.

Gilt and enamelled glass mosque lamp, with Naskh inscription in white (upper) and blue (below) ; XIV. century.



Fig. 107.

Mihrab inscription done in stucco, in Naskh of the Ayyubide period, Sinjar.

It varies from the Eastern Naskh, as the example (fig. 108) given below, would show, in the proportion of its circles that are wider in circumference, with slanting strokes flung swiftly as in Shikasta.

¹, Ibn Khaldun, I. pp. 350—3.

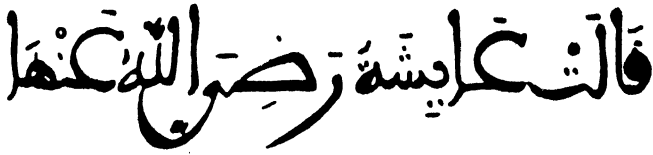


Fig. 168.

The Qairwani style.

In Spain another form of the Naskh, called Andalusian or Cardovan, came into existence. It was rounder in its curves than the Qairwani. Inscriptions on the walls of Alhambra, excluding the Kufic,



Fig. 100.

The Andalusian Naskh.

are written in the monumental Andalusian style (figs. 6, 7, 8, 109). It flourished till the fall of the Almohades in Spain.¹

Fez evolved its Fasi style which was still rounder than the Algerian variety of the Naskh (figs. 23, 88, 110). In central Africa, at Timbaktu appeared a style called Sudani. Its letters were large and thick, round or angular. The Tunisian and the Algerian styles did



Fig. 110.

Fasi of the 14th century A. D. from a
frieze on the door of a Moroccan home.

not differ from the general Western style in any remarkable degree. Although the Western style is the earliest departure from the Kufic, its oldest example dates only about 300/900 A. D.

The earliest inscription in Nasta'liq is probably that of the "Persian Deed for Sale of Land" discovered by Dr. Hoernle, and

1. Ibid. I, p. 351.

published by D. S. Margoliouth.¹ A digit in the date that it bears is not clearly legible. Margoliouth reads 401/1010-1011 A. D. This document bears certain proof of the fact that Nasta'liq style existed and was practiced long before this deed was written. Another Persian inscription carved in relief on the wall of an ancient mosque in Armenia (Arze-Rum), discovered and published by Belin,² dated 351/960 A. D., although written after the Kufic style does not successfully conceal the fact that the round (Naskh or Nasta'liq) style has been faked to look like the angular Kufic.

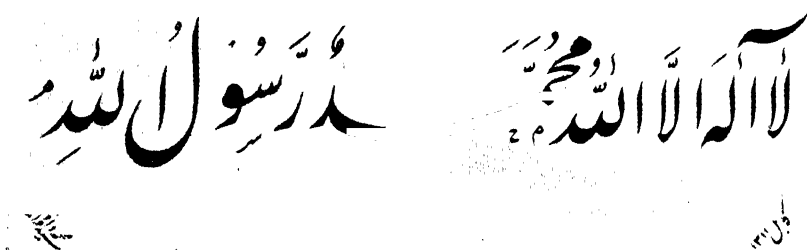


Fig. 111.

A specimen of modern Nasta'liq, confession of the Moslem faith, by
Muhammad Da'ud al Husaini, Kabul.

It is true, though it sounds rather curious, that the Kufic prevailed in Persia longer than it did even in Arabia. The round Nasta'liq was developed by the Persian. Its final horizontal flourishes are considered to have been the result of the long habit of writing in the Pahlavi script that prevailed in Persia before the Arabs raided the country. Though the Nasta'liq style came into being much earlier, books were written in it only in the 13th century A. D. Persian poetical works were first copied in it. However, the habit of copying the Koran and scientific works in the Naskh and the interlinear translations and marginal commentaries in the Nasta'liq, proves that the Nasta'liq style must have become more popular in Persia than the Naskh at a very early stage of its development.

1. JRAS. Oct. 1903, p. 761.

2. Journal Asiatique, 1852, p. 376, plate II.



Fig. 112.

A vase with white ground and the inscription painted in blue against a back-ground of light conventional foliage ; XVI century, Anatolia.



Fig. 113.

How an angle broadens into a curve might be observed by comparing the letter *r* or *d* of the Kufic style with that of the Naskh.¹ In the Kufic these letters are written in the form of an acute angle. In the Naskh this angle broadens into a curve ; in the case of *r* into an obtuse curve. The upper arm of the angle is bent at the top towards the right and the lower arm running slantingly towards the left turns upward in a small curve pointed at the top like the sting of a scorpion. If we place this Naskh *r* upside down (fig. 113) its curves would resemble the graceful bends

1. Most of the styles illustrated below are adopted from : Les Calligraphes et Les Miniaturistes, 1908, pp. 21-62 ; Subhu l-A'sha vol. III, pp. 54-142 ; Arzhang-i-Cin, 1925 ; Nazm-i-Parwin, 1935 ; I'jaz-Raqam 1927 ; Oriental Penmanship, 1886, etc.

in the long neck of a crane, the base of the letter *r* would suggest the beak of the crane turned towards the right. The curve marking the shoulder of the crane is not used in Naskh, it is peculiar to Nasta'liq, and forms the letter *l* in Nasta'liq placed upside down.



Fig. 114.

The curve forming the base of this letter *r* is peculiar to styles in Naskh (fig. 114). The same curve will be observed in the final flourishes of some other letters of the Arabic script. This curve, which just avoids an angle, becomes a crescent curve in Nasta'liq. Curves and strokes shown in figs. 115—118, are peculiar to Naskh.



Fig. 115.



Fig. 116.



Fig. 117.



Fig. 118.

Suls is the ornamental variety of the Naskh style. In its structure it differs from the Naskh only in the proportion of its curves



Fig. 119.

and strokes which are about three times the size of the Naskh (fig. 90). The Suls brings out with full emphasis the wavy movement suppressed in the peculiar curves and strokes of the Naskh style. In the Suls style strokes take the form of a dagger and curves run smoothly like waves of water (fig. 88). As this style was generally used as an ornament, architectural or otherwise, it was written in bold curves and



Figs. 120, 121.

wide swinging waves slightly recoiling at their pointed tops. This sweep is common in the Diwani style of the Turks and in Shikasta. The Suls sweep is that of a curved dagger, as shown in figs. 120 and 121. This sweep might be written in Suls in a straight stroke or in a broadly curved one (fig. 122). However, this rebounding stroke is more common to Shikasta than to any other style. The horizontal stroke both straight and curved might be written in Shikasta as shown in fig. 123. Fig. 100 is a beautiful specimen of Shikasta-amiz calligraphy, by Sayed Muhammad Da'ud



Fig. 123.

A panel in decorative Naskh, written in gold by the celebrated calligraphist
'Abdullah Tabbakh; Santiniketan Museum,



Fig. 123.

A panel of Naskh calligraphy by 'Abdullah Tabbakh, dated 1007/1598 A.D.
Santiniketan Museum.

al-Husaini. It is in a style mixed of Nasta'liq and Shikasta.

Of the ornamental flourishes the most graceful is perhaps that of the style known as Riqua' (fig. 126). It is surely more decorative than Suls. Its strokes move with the grace of a running snake or like the ripples of a stream.



Fig. 124.



Fig. 125.



Fig. 126.

Riqua' is not similar to the style known as Tauqi', so far as I can judge. It seems to be only a decorative way of writing the Naskh and resembles Suls. When these curves curl up into small knots and the strokes become more pointed and thinner in their breadth, we have the style called Zulf-i-'arus, i. e. "locks of the bride". It is in



Fig. 127.



Fig. 128.

fact a decorative style of the Nasta'liq type (figs. 127, 128, 142). Resembling the Suls in its pointed stroke but more

peculiar in its execution is the style called Rihan. Its strokes end in straight points and rarely turn up in a curve or a loop, as they do in the Suls and Zulf-i-'arus styles. Its strokes are thick in the middle and gradually become thinner towards their ends. Sometimes they are like straight shafts descending slantingly towards the left.



Fig. 129.

In fact, these strokes are rarely horizontal in their position (fig. 129). In the proportion of its curves and strokes it slightly differs from Suls. The swinging flourishes of the type used in Suls, Riqua' and Shikasta were also used in the old Maghribi Naskh.

The Gulzar and the Ta'us are not styles in themselves, they are purely ornamental treatments of other styles. These are not written



Fig. 130.

with the pen in the regular manner, but are drawn in outline and then filled in with decorative lines (fig. 130), with flowers (fig. 131) or animals like fish or peacock ; in each case the treatment is named differently as

Gulzar, Mahi or Ta'us. In Ta'us the letters are traced in a way that they resemble peacocks in their outlines. The spaces within the

outlines of these distorted letters are also decorated with peacock feather drawings.

The Larza too is no independent style by itself. Like the Gulzar and other ornamental treatments it is only a manner of writing any particular style. In the Larza letters are written in a way that they look like 'quivering' twigs. It has no other peculiarity than this that in it the writing appears to have been written by a hand shaking with excitement (fig. 132).



Fig. 131.

A specimen of Nasta'liq treated as Gulzar, by Hamid Husain.

The style called Manshur is a peculiar one. In it letters look exactly like pieces of a tape or ribbon twisted to form letters, with the end of the tape turned round the corners of letters in loops (figs. 133, 134).

Muhaqqiq too is a decorative style. Its strokes break up abruptly and points sometimes project into one or two threadlike fibres, as shown in fig. 135. Like other ornamental styles of calligraphy this one too is used rarely, and only

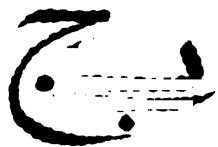


Fig. 133.



Fig. 133.

Fig. 134.

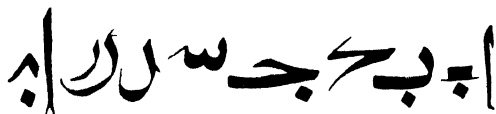


Fig. 135.

as a novelty. This style is written in thick and bold characters. It is similar to Rihaan in its proportions of strokes and curves, but is bolder than that in its characters. Another difference which is much more

important is that strokes in the Muhaqqiq are seldom written slantingly and none of the horizontal strokes is ever pointed.

Among the decorative styles or decorative treatments of the Arabic script Bihar is perhaps the least decorative. It is a peculiar



Fig. 136.

style, almost Naskh in the structure of its characters, but its strokes, that shoot horizontally, begin from a thin point and gradually grow thicker towards their left end and either terminate in a sharp point resembling that of Rihaṇ or in a blunt solid point peculiar to the Nasta'liq style (fig. 136).



Fig. 137.



Fig. 138.

The Nasta'liq style is the latest. No other style has succeeded it, nor is it ever likely to be. In it curves develop into most sensual forms—either round and supple like the crescent or smooth and oval like an egg. Its strokes are long and sharply or bluntly pointed in the form of a straight sword or a scimitar. In it strokes flow easily, either straight horizontally, or with a slight gradually increasing bend towards the middle in the manner of a sword. These strokes (excepting those of the letters *k* and *s*) never descend slantingly as they do in Suls, Riqā', Rihaṇ, Diwani and Shikasta (figs. 137-40). The specimen given in fig. 87 might be observed for forming an exact idea of the nature of a Nasta'liq stroke. Curves in the Naskh and Suls are not quite



Fig. 139.



Fig. 140.

round (figs. 122, 123); they have, particularly the Suls ones, the grace of a line that descends down the neck of a duck and passing round the belly ascends to the tip of its tail (fig. 119). This curve is the characteristic curve of the Suls. The wavy character of Suls curves is marked in the curve that is peculiar to letters resembling the letter *j* (fig. 141). This



Fig. 141.



Fig. 142.



Fig. 143.

curve, but for the recoiling flourish in the centre and at the beginning of the letter, is Nasta'liq in its roundness. Hence not peculiar to the Suls. Other curves like that of the letter 'a are common to most of the styles (fig. 144). Curves in Zulf-i-'arus, like its strokes, either turn at the end in a coil upward or downward or descend in the form of wavy hair.



Fig. 144.

Dots or rounded heads of letters like those of the Ar. *m*, *f*, *q*, *w*, or *h* have been written in a variety of ways, some of which are shown in figs. 144 and 145.

There are a few more styles that are mentioned in works on calligraphy, but I have not illustrated them as they are not in any way important as types of writing. For example, the style known as Ghubar is simply a very fine writing. Letters in it are so small that they appear almost as fleeting dust.



Fig. 145.

The Shafi'a style is derived from Nasta'liq. In this style curves are often left as half curves and prolonged to an extent that they resemble slanting strokes.

The Hilali is a style in which letters are written in a way that they look as if composed of crescent moons.



Fig. 146.

The Badral-Kamal, the Vilayat and the Tauqi' (fig. 146) are, properly speaking, imperfect distortions, however ingenious, of the Nasta'liq style.

The Shikasta, or the broken style, is a further simplification of the Nasta'liq, and is, in fact, a sort of short-hand. Letters are rarely disconnected from each other in this commonly used style, nor are diacritical dots or vowels ever written. Though at first sight it looks like having been written in a most careless way, yet it requires much practice and knack. This

style came into existence in courts, secretariats and business offices where the writing of letters and other documents had to be done hastily. In it curves turn into long-flung strokes, curved naturally in



Fig. 147.

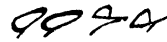


Fig. 148.

the sweep of the pen. Calligraphists have moulded even these broken forms of letters written in haste into some sort of grace. As far as reading is concerned, this style is the most inconvenient (figs. 147, 148).

The most ingenious use of the Arabic script is the one technically known as Tughra. A sentence from the Koran or a common prayer is written in a way that the composition outlines a bird, or a tiger or an elephant, or any other animal excepting those considered unclean or of ill-omen. Such Tughra writings are used as amulets by the superstitious masses. The lion or the tiger, which are symbolic of the valour of 'Ali, are mostly used in Tughra and the prayer composed of such figures, called Nad-i-'Ali, is addressed to him and is supposed to protect the keepers from the malicious influence of evil spirits.

Such animal figures, in spite of the ban the priest has put on them, form a very



Fig. 149.

common object of decoration used in Moslem homes. They serve the double purpose of decoration and a means of warding off the evil spirit from the house. The figure of the tiger (fig. 151) has a text in Urdu which informs us that a Hindu or Moslem or any one who has faith in this drawing and hangs it on the wall of his house, would be safe from all sorts of evil



Fig. 150.

would be safe from all sorts of evil

influences. The Tughra was written at an auspicious time. A rather favourite form of Tughra used for such magical purpose is the parrot (fig. 149).



Fig. 151.

signify. Fig. 154 shows an example of writing such names in the form of a human head. The elephant, with the *hauda* on its back (fig. 152), is produced by arranging the name and designation of the Nawwab of Tawara.

I might mention here a very uncommon way of writing in the Tughra style (fig. 153). The writing is done in Kufic and the example belongs to the period when Kufic was not yet obsolete. The upper portion



Fig. 153.

of letters in the writing is so decorated with drawings of human and animal figures that the letters below seem to form part of the lower limbs of their bodies or top shoes worn by them. The decoration is a lively scene of a procession. The letters are shaded deeply to keep in contrast with the figures above them. Tughra is most commonly used in seals, wherein names are engraved in beautiful and fantastic ways (fig. 157). Less like Tughra in decorative form but

Tughra need not be necessarily in animal figures, it might be written in any other ingenious way, as would require a good deal of deciphering before one can read it. Names of Allah, Muhammad, his daughter and those of the succeeding Kalifs are generally written in various becoming ways that help in keeping in mind the characters of those whom the names

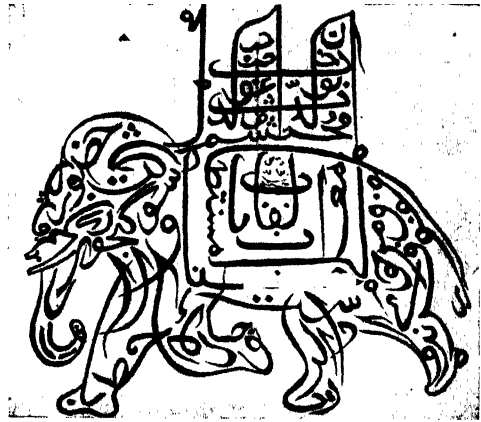


Fig. 152.

more complicated than the ordinary way of writing is the style used in the ornamentation of glazed earthen ware and metal vessels. Like the Kufic, though not in as much complicated manner, Naskh and Nasta'liq styles have been used in the decoration of walls and ceramics (figs. 9, 82, 83, 88, 89, 90, 93, 96, 100, 107, 155-160).

The technique and most of the designs used in the decoration of wall sur-



Fig. 154.



Fig. 155.

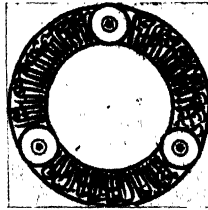


Fig. 156.

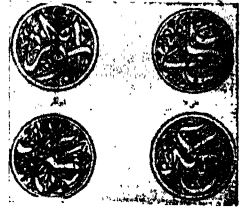


Fig. 157.



Fig. 158.



Fig. 159.

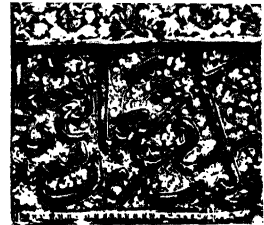


Fig. 160.

faces, and the ceramics were adopted from the Kufic. Particularly the march of perpendicular lines or the concentric convergence of these lines was used in Naskh and Nasta'liq decorations (figs. 82, 83), but the result rarely reached the same fitness of the means with the subject and the perfection that the script decoration had reached in the Kufic period.

The Tughra styles engraved at Murshidabad during the 15th century A. D. (figs. 162, 163) are examples of the type of the decorative style of writing that prevailed in Bengal till the advent of the British. We find that the Kufic model with its verticle strokes running in procession is still before the calligraphist. Excepting in such early architectures as the tomb of Altamash, and the Mosque at Fatehpur Sikri (fig. 9) decorative calligraphy of most of the buildings of the Moslem period is tame in comparison with that of the same period

in Persia. Bengal stones perhaps represent the most deteriorated examples of monumental writing. Nothing can be more ugly in writing than the Gour inscription of the reign of Shamsuddin Altamash, dated 633/1235 A. D., inscribed on the well built by Kutlugh Khan.¹ Inscriptions engraved in such atrocious style are common in Bengal. Some of the inscriptions found in Murshidabad district (figs. 162, 163),



Fig. 161.

Detail of an inscription (fig. 93), Mustansir billah's Madrasa (630 A. H.), Baghdad.

are good and perhaps the best among engraved inscriptions found in Bengal. The varticle line is the chief attraction of such inscriptions, while the style of the calligraphy is a mixed one.²

Calligraphic painting on silk and ivory and carving on metals, wood, ivory and stone, are, as I have mentioned, among the most

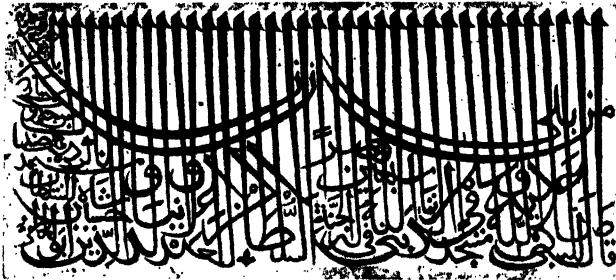


Fig. 162.

Inscription of the reign of 'Ala'uddin Husain Shah, dated 905/1499 A. D., Babargram, Murshidabad.

popular uses of this art. Naskh and Nasta'liq styles, though more difficult of execution on hard material because of their round and

1. Arch. Survey of India, Vol. XV. pl. XX.
2. JASB. N. S. July 1917, plates III, VI.

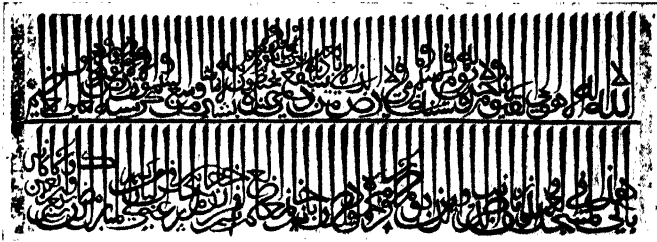


Fig. 163.

Inscription recording the excavation of the tank Sagar
Dighi, dated 921/1515, A. D., Murshidabad.

pointed curves and strokes than the angular Kufic, have been used with great success and not infrequently have surpassed the workmanship of the days of the Kufic. The brass tray bearing inscription in decorative Naskh, inlaid with silver, with the name of Sultan Sha'ban¹ (XIV century A. D.), bronze vases and candlesticks, chandeliers, writing cases, Koran boxes and cisterns, etc., inlaid with gold or silver, some of the finest examples of which are preserved in the various museums of Europe, Egypt and Persia, bear calligraphic inscriptions of unapproachable beauty.

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REVIEWS

Jawaharlal Nehru—an Autobiography

Published by John Lane, The Bodley Head, London.

It is seldom that a reviewer has the good fortune of being called upon to review a more fascinating book. We have never had the pleasure of meeting the author, Pundit Jawaharlal ; but, along with so many others in India, we have, for a long time, been an ardent admirer of his dynamic personality, indomitable courage and transparent honesty, and have watched his remarkable career with the keenest of interest. The enviable position which he already occupies in the Indian political world is, we venture to predict, not by any means the apex of his career, but is merely a rung in the ladder which will, in the fulness of time, lead him up to heights, of which we can as yet have no clear conception.

Envious people, narrow-minded people and people with a limited understanding have in the past described the Pundit as the *enfant terrible*, the *wunderkind* of Indian Politics, as a wayward youngster not amenable to the discipline of his elders. Some have likewise characterized him as a dreamer and a theorist, who has never had any real contact with the land of his birth, with the people whom he claims to represent.

The Editor of an Anglo-Indian Daily went even farther than this the other day. He published a leading article in his Journal commenting on the presidential address of the Pundit under the caption of *An Englishman Speaks*.

Now, is Jawaharlal really the *enfant terrible* of Indian Politics ? Is he a mere theorist with no real knowledge or understanding of his countrymen ? Is he more an Englishman than an Indian ? These are questions to which this autobiography supplies ready answers.

This remarkable book was written entirely in prison and is, in the language of the author, not so much a survey of recent Indian history as an attempt to trace, to the best of his ability, his own mental development. But, considering the position that Jawaharlal has occupied in Indian Politics, the life that he has led ever since his return from England in 1912, even his personal narrative, his musings, his self-questionings, must necessarily to a large extent cover the ground of recent Indian history. For, it must be remembered that

from 1920 to 1935 this ardent patriot has been to prison seven times for his political convictions, that for years he has been the General Secretary of the Indian Congress and that twice he has been elected the President of that august body.

What appears to us remarkable is that the autobiography of such a man should be so fair and impartial, and so completely free from any bitterness. We fully agree with Edward Thompson's view that the book is "written with modesty and power, and expresses a character of outstanding nobility."

But this is not all. It is rarely that one finds in a political leader such a vein of humour, such sense of proportion as one meets with on almost every page of this wonderful book. The fact that Jawaharlal has been for two decades in the thick of the struggle has not in any way warped his vision or destroyed his perspective. Throughout the book he has judged men and events with a generosity rare in politics. Thompson is perfectly right when he says: "It is the mirror of a man trying all things impartially, striving to save his own soul and his comrades' homeward way, but caring infinitely more about the comrades' homeward way."

Nowhere in this book do we find the Pundit complacently patting himself on the back. On the contrary, he has missed no chance of judging himself severely where in his opinion such severity has been necessary. We quote an instance below.

Gidwani had been unfairly arrested and imprisoned in the Nabha State. Jawaharlal who was then at Allahabad became indignant on hearing of this and wrote up challenging the legality of the administrator's action and asking to be furnished with copies of his orders. The administrator refused to comply with the request. Jawaharlal says: "I felt inclined to go to Nabha myself and allow the administrator to treat me as he had treated Gidwani. Loyalty to a colleague seemed to demand it. But many friends thought otherwise and dissuaded me. I took shelter behind the advice of friends, made of it a pretext to cover my own weakness. . . . I have always felt a little ashamed of thus deserting a colleague. As often with us all, discretion was preferred to valour" (p. 116).

Another thing that appeals to us very strongly about this book is the style in which it is written. The language is easy, almost conversational in its flow, and yet capable of developing immense power wherever the occasion demands it. Equally remarkable is the naiveté, the transparent simplicity, such as appears in passages like

these: "Mr. Srinivas Sastri . . . was addressing a students' meeting in Allahabad. . . . He went on and called upon the boys to report each other's sins of omission and commission immediately to the authorities. In other words they were to spy on each other and play the part of informers. . . . I listened aghast to this friendly counsel of a great leader. . . . I felt that there was a great difference between Mr. Sastri's morality and the morality that had been taught to me" (p. 30).

One of the reasons, we suppose, why the *Statesman* called Jawaharlal an Englishman. India can well afford to have many more "Englishmen" of this type.

On page 31 appears this passage relating to the Great War. "Moderate and Extremist alike learnt with satisfaction of German victories. There was no love for Germany, of course, only the desire to see our own rulers humbled. It was the weak and helpless man's idea of vicarious revenge." On another page, comparing peasants' meetings with the political conferences of the sophisticated, the Pundit says: "Very different were our conferences where our chosen workers, including myself, performed on the platform. There was sufficient posing there and no lack of vulgarity in the flamboyant addresses."

He goes on to say: "It is difficult to see oneself as others see one. And so unable to criticise myself I took to watching carefully the ways of others and I found considerable amusement in the occupation. And then the terrible thought would strike me that I might perhaps appear equally ludicrous to others" (p. 78).

On page 205, in the course of some self-analysis the Pundit remarks: "My reputation as a hero is entirely a bogus one, and I do not feel at all heroic, and generally the heroic attitude or the dramatic pose in life strikes me as silly. As for romance, I should say that I am the least romantic of individuals. It is true that I have some physical and mental courage, but the background of that probably is pride: personal, group, and national, and a reluctance to be coerced into anything."

Gandhiji once told an interviewer that if he had not the gift of humour he might have committed suicide. Jawaharlal certainly runs no risk of self-murder. His book is brilliant with humorous touches—humour at the expense of others, as well as humour at his own expense. This is what makes his autobiography such delightful reading.

In 1929, while yet young, Jawaharlal was elected President of the Congress for the first time. The election came about under rather peculiar circumstances and he admits: "My election was indeed a great honour and a great responsibility for me." The circumstances that led up to this incident are described on pages 194 and 195. The Pundit's remarks are very characteristic and we feel justified in giving an extract, not very brief.

"Gandhiji was recommended for the Presidentship by the Provincial Committees. . . . Almost to the last hour all of us thought that he would agree. But he would not do so, and at the last moment he pressed my name forward. The A. I. C. C. was somewhat taken aback . . . and a little irritated. . . . For want of any other person, and in a spirit of resignation, they finally elected me.

"I have seldom felt quite so annoyed and humiliated. It was not that I was not sensible to the honour, for it was a great honour. . . . But I did not come to it by the main entrance or even a side entrance. I appeared suddenly by a trapdoor and bewildered the audience into acceptance. They put a brave face on it, and like a necessary pill swallowed me. My pride was hurt, and almost I felt like handing back the honour. Fortunately I restrained myself."

Now why did the Pundit accept the honour? Was it because his vanity was satisfied thereby? We do not think so for a moment. There can be no doubt that he restrained himself because he did not wish to go against Gandhiji's wishes and probably his father's. Yet this is the hot-headed youngster who has never had any respect for his elders!

Throughout the book there are tender references to Pundit Motilal and to the relationship that subsisted between father and son. The following passage occurs on page 195 and refers to Jawaharlal's election as President. "Probably the person who was happiest about this decision was my father. He did not wholly like my politics, but he liked me well enough, and any good thing that came my way pleased him. Often he would criticise me and speak a little curtly to me, but no person who cared to retain his goodwill could run me down in his presence."

The description of the late Punditji's last moments is very touching: "There he sat like an old lion mortally wounded and with his physical strength almost gone, but still very leonine and kingly. As I watched him, I wondered what thoughts passed through his head. . . . "I am going soon, Mahatmaji," he said to Gandhiji, "And I shall not be here

to see Swaraj. But I know that you have won it and will soon have it" (p. 246).

Jawaharlal's description of himself is always in the best of taste and sparkling with humour. Comparing his own looks with Maulana Azad's, a predecessor of his in the Presidential chair, he says: "Abul Kalam Azad has specially cultivated a look of venerable age to give a suitable background to his great learning. As statesmanship has seldom been considered one of my virtues and no one has accused me of possessing an excess of learning, I had escaped so far the accusation of age, though my hair has turned grey and my looks betray me."

In the year 1929, the Viceroy announced a forthcoming Round Table Conference. Leaders of all parties met together and agreed to issue a joint manifesto. It was decided that the Congress should drop the demand for independence. How Jawaharlal had to compromise with his conscience he describes thus on page 197: "That joint manifesto was a bitter pill for some of us. To give up the demand for independence, even in theory and even for a short while, was wrong and dangerous. . . . So I hesitated and refused to sign the manifesto (Subhas Bose had definitely refused to sign it), but, as was not unusual with me, I allowed myself to be talked into signing. Even so, . . . I thought of withdrawing from the Congress Presidentship, and wrote accordingly to Gandhiji. I do not suppose that I meant this seriously, though I was sufficiently upset. A soothing letter from Gandhiji and three days of reflection calmed me."

Reading between the lines is it not abundantly clear that this was no case of backsliding on the Pundit's part but merely submission to the discipline of his elders !

As is but natural, Gandhiji is the most important figure in this autobiography. The Pundit's allegiance to him has never been shaken, not even under the most trying circumstances. Yet there is no lack of criticism, frank and free, of the views and actions of the great leader. Comparing Gandhiji with his father Jawaharlal says (p. 65) : "But it was a strange combination—the saint, the stoic, the man of religion, one who went through life rejecting what it offers in the way of sensation and physical pleasure, and one who had been a bit of an epicure, who accepted life and welcomed and enjoyed its many sensations, and cared little for what may come in the hereafter. . . . Yet there were common bonds, common interests, which drew the two together."

In 1924 a sharp conflict appeared in the Congress Committee

between the Mahatma and the Swarajists. The former by introducing the Khadi franchise sought to exclude from the Congress all who did not wholly accept his constructive programme. Says Jawaharlal: "But although he had the majority with him he weakened in his resolve. . . . During the next three or four months, to my amazement, he changed several times on the question. . . . He was superb in his special field of Satyagrahic direct action, and his instinct unerringly led him to take the right steps. He was also very good in working himself and making others work quietly for social reform among the masses. He could understand absolute war or absolute peace. Anything in between he did not appreciate. The Swarajist programme of struggle and opposition inside councils left him cold."

What exactly is the political creed of Jawaharlal himself? This is a question which has agitated both his admirers and detractors for a long time. We shall try and give our readers some idea of what should be the reply to this question from the pages of this autobiography, where the Pundit himself has very carefully traced his mental development.

While a student in England, he tells us, he was a warm admirer of 'Tilak and Aurobindo. The then extremist programme made a strong appeal to him and his fellow students.

"In 1920," he says, "I was totally ignorant of labour conditions of factories and fields and my political outlook was entirely bourgeois."

Speaking of his youth he says, "My politics has been those of my class, the bourgeoisie."

But this statement is not easy to accept. Jawaharlal was very much more an aristocrat than a bourgeois, both by birth and education. No mere bourgeois could at his age and at the outset of a professional career have plunged into the Kisan movement as he did. No doubt this plunge was not quite deliberate but as the Pundit admits on p. 51: "Very probably I would have been drawn to Kisans anyhow, sooner or later, but the manner of my going to them would have been different and the effect on me might also have been different."

In the chapter entitled "Paradoxes" Jawaharlal states categorically that in his opinion the only possible solution of our troubles is the establishment of a Socialist order, and that if existing political or social institutions stand in the way of such a change, they have to be removed. He is however against coercion, and says that the people concerned have to be converted or won over to it.

Regarding industrialisation too, the Pundit's opinions are definite.

He has an array of cogent arguments to advance against the programme of pushing forward village industries at the expense of mass production. We quote a few lines from p. 527.

"These few considerations and a host of others seem to me to exclude the possibility or the desirability of any narrow autarchical solution of our agrarian and industrial problems. Indeed they affect every phase of our national life. We cannot take refuge in vague and emotional phrases, but must face these facts and adapt ourselves to them, so that we may become the subjects of history instead of being its helpless objects."

Even Gandhiji comes in for some trenchant criticism for his support of zamindars, chiefs and capitalists.

"Again I think of the paradox that is Gandhiji. With all his keen intellect and passion for bettering the down-trodden and oppressed, why does he support a system, and a system which is obviously decaying, which creates this misery and waste? . . . He blesses all the relics of the old order which stand as obstacles in the way of advance--the feudal States, the big *zamindaris* and *talukdaris*, the present capitalist system."

These are not the words of a typical bourgeois, even a repentant one, as the Pundit calls himself! It is only a working man or an aristocrat who can speak in this strain, an aristocrat who is intellectually convinced that the present system must be scrapped. Anyhow, there is no vagueness about Jawaharlal's attitude towards Socialism. It is the panacea for all India's ills. It appears to us, however, that his socialism does not as yet extend to the eradication of the peasant proprietor and to the introduction of collective farming. He would, it appears, be satisfied for the present with the uprooting of the *zamindar* and the capitalist.

Another thing about which there has been considerable speculation is the attitude of Jawaharlal towards the creed of nonviolence. We have referred above to his opinion that in order to establish Socialist order we must convert people or win them over, not coerce them. From this, we think, it can be safely deduced that the Pundit entirely disapproves of Bolshevik *methods*, however much he is attracted by the *ideals* of Karl Marx.

Likewise, as far as terrorism in this country is concerned, he has always denounced it in clear terms; though, in common with so many other thinkers, he holds that terrorist acts are not a disease but the symptoms of a disease, and that it is futile to treat the symptoms

and not the disease (p. 482). The Pundit thus clearly deprecates both Bolshevik and terrorist violence. But this is not enough. What one wants to know is, whether his disapproval of violence applies to all countries and all times, or it applies to modern India only. In other words, does he accept nonviolence as an absolute and inviolable creed, like his leader? We get no definite reply to this question in the chapter, "Conversion or Compulsion." All that we can make out is that Jawaharlal's nonviolence is not based on religious faith. What is it then? Expediency, policy? We do not feel sure. One comes across such passages as, "Violence has played a great part in the world's history." "It is impossible to ignore the importance of violence in the past and present. To do so is to ignore life. Yet violence is undoubtedly bad . . . " "Compulsion will often be necessary, in addition to conversion, and the best we can do is to limit this compulsion and use it in such a manner that its evil is lessened." This seems to be the Pundit's last word on the subject. We have no comments to offer.

In conclusion we repeat what we have said before. The book under review is delightful reading. It is rich and varied, and the glimpses it gives of Jawaharlal's character and unique personality confirm us in our belief that his future will be even more brilliant than his past. What that future will be, no one can say. How much he will change in the years to come, no one can predict—It all depends on the road his motherland is destined to travel.

This autobiography will be read by very many English people. We would like them to believe that there are many in this country who, like Jawaharlal, are neither bitter nor irreconcilable, who are human like themselves, and whose only fault is that they love their country.

To the Indian readers of the book we have this to say. Try to realise what Jawaharlal says, that emotionalism and hysterics are not going to lead you anywhere, avoid play-acting and take a matter of fact, common sense view of patriotism, never lose your sense of proportion and cultivate a sense of humour.

C. C. Dutt.

Secrets of Japan

By Chaman Lal. Second Edition, Tokyo, 1936.

A BOOK which carries the protective armour of benedictory and appreciative testimonials from a host of prominent leaders, with Gandhiji at one end and Rajah Mahendra Pratap at the other, is not an easy target of criticism for a reviewer like myself who is a mere student of current history and international politics. But, however impudent it might seem, the compelling responsibility of a just valuation of the book cannot be avoided. It is sad that an Indian, and at that one who professes to be a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, could have and should have written such a book ; for to me it seems the book is nothing beyond blatant propaganda in favour of the despoiler of Manchuria. The book is characterised by not what the author has written on the Land of the Rising Sun but by what he has avoided in writing. The author of course claims a great virtue in this for his book ; he writes with evident gusto that a special feature of the book is its complete absence of political controversies. So complete is indeed his disassociation with political controversies that he has succeeded in keeping out of discussion the all-important question of Japanese misrule in Korea and her wars in Manchuria. A great achievement that ! One could even attempt writing a book on the secrets of modern Italy and avoid mentioning the Lipari Isles, Abyssinia and the famous castor oil method of politics. I am sure, given the chance, our author could perform this miracle too.

A hundred poets have sung to the glory of the Fujiama and a thousand artists have depicted with their brush the beauties of the Japanese countryside when the Cherry is in bloom, and Mr. Chamanlal need not have taken so much space in his book for these descriptions in his rather faltering language. For he has not aimed at writing a traveller's guide book ; his purpose is a lofty one, that of teaching his countrymen the secrets of Japan's greatness. Therefore, singularly out of place is also the chapter of devotion to the Emperor, for by no stretch of imagination can it be argued that the Japanese people are great because they indulge in Emperor-worship. The author has even gone so far as to claim that it is because of this great quality in the Japanese people that they have been able to flout the League of Nations.

For us the most important chapters are the last two, entitled, 'A False Alarm' and 'Lessons from Japan'. In the former the author

has taken great pains to assure us that Japan has no territorial ambitions so far as India is concerned. She is content merely with the Indian market. But it was the same greed for the Chinese market that led eventually to the rape of Manchuria. Whether a Japanese conquest of India is a possibility or not, that the desire is not there cannot be so lightly dismissed. One uninitiated into the mysteries of international politics may wonder at the Japanese plan about the Kra canal, but not we. In the last chapter Mr. Chaman Lal, the Super-Patriot, has put in a number of stories he gathered during his sojourn in the country showing the wonderful patriotism of the Japanese people. Most of the stories seem repugnant to us. I shall refer to only one. A young butcher, on being disqualified to join a battalion during the last war in Manchuria, claimed the privilege of presenting a flag to the army, which he had drawn with his own blood. The author comments: "He wished to do something to encourage the soldiers on the continent whom he could not join. We need this spirit of patriotism in every one of us, before we can dream of independence." May we ever remain slaves, if our Independence means organised butchery, destruction and enslavement of our peace-loving neighbours !

A. K. C.

Speeches and Writings of Satchidananda Sinha

(Published by Ramnarain Lal. Allahabad. Rs. 5/-)

WE have the authority of a famous Cambridge don that the Provincial and Central Legislatures in India are no better than dignified debating societies. Whatever may be the nature of these councils, no one can deny that the oratorical performances there are by no means insignificant. Unfortunately these speeches in our country are seldom saved from oblivion for the future generations. We have therefore good reason to welcome the collected speeches of Mr. Satchidananda Sinha which have been recently published in book form. Mr. Sinha has had a most interesting political career and being neither a demagogue nor a doctrinaire political philosopher his speeches are full of human interest and delightful touches of colour and gaiety. They are pleasant reading and at the same time are important contributions to the political problems of the country. Not that we always agree with his views—at least for five years he had been the official spokesman of the Government of Behar and Orissa—but we cannot but admire his

style which, in the words of Babu Rajendra Prasad, is at once trenchant and attractive.

The price of the book is too high and could easily be two rupees less. At least there should have been a cheaper popular edition.

A. K. C.

Pushpa ("Gulistan", Khar, Bombay. Annual Subscription Re. 1/.).

S. P. C. I. Quarterly Magazine (Society for the Protection of Children in India, 24 Camac Street, Calcutta.

Annual subscription : Rs. 2/-).

We have been receiving regularly copies of the above two magazines since the beginning of their publication. *Pushpa* is the monthly English organ of the All-India Children's Association, the motto of which is "Education and Entertainment." Its regular features, therefore, are short stories, snapshots, poems and games, together with newsy notes and an educative opening article on some aspect of our National Life. It is a good link between the English-knowing children of India and Abroad.

The *S. P. C. I. Quarterly* is the official quarterly organ of the Society for the Protection of Children in India, one of the principal objects of which is "to strive to save children from exploitation, from physical ill-treatment, and from all forms of corruption." It, therefore, deals with the visions and work of the Children's Institutions in the country, such as Orphanages, Juvenile Courts, etc. All those who are engaged in bettering the lot of the young will find the Quarterly informative as well as instructive.

G. M.

WHO'S WHO IN THE PRESENT NUMBER

(*In the order of the articles*)

Rabindranath Tagore—Poet. Founder-President, Visva-Bharati.

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy—Curator, Oriental Section, Boston Museum.
Art-critic and author of international reputation.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya—An Indian poet. Has published several volumes of verse in English, of which the latest is *Strange Journey*.

Horace G. Alexandre—A well-known English writer and friend of Pacifism.

E. H. d' Alvis—A Ceylonese poet.

C. F. Andrews—Famous as a brave christian champion of the wronged races. Author of *Christ in Silence*, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, etc.

Richard B. Gregg—Well-known as the American advocate of Non-Violence. Author of *The Power of Non-Violence*.

Sri Aurobindo—The Indian philosopher and yogi who lives in his ashram at Pondicherry.

Dilip Kumar Roy—Once a very popular musician in Bengal; now living in the ashram at Pondicherry as one of Sri Aurobindo's devotees. A Bengali author.

Nandalal Bose—One of the leading artists of India and Principal of the Fine Arts School, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan.

Surendranath Tagore—Ex-editor of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, *Old Series*. Nephew of Rabindranath Tagore. Has translated several of his stories and pieces in English.

M. Ziauddin—Lecturer in Islamic Studies in the Research Department, Visva-Bharati.

C. C. Dutt—Retired member of the Indian Civil Service and a Bengali author.

A. K. C. (Anil Kumar Chanda)—Lecturer in Political Science, Visva-Bharati, and private secretary to Rabindranath Tagore.

G. M. (Gurudayal Mullik)—Lecturer in English, Visva-Bharati.

The Visva-Bharati Quarterly

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Where the mind is without fear
And the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up
into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms
towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is not frozen by the
ice of conventional thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,
let my country awake.

Rabindranath Tagore



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THE PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE *

Rabindranath Tagore

OUR scriptures tell us that the One desired to be Many, and the result was Creation. The One that is in me, the individual person, also seeks to realise itself through the many: in its power of such realisation is its wealth. On my consciousness there impinges an incessant flow of the waves of form, event, cognition and emotion, and its response to all these is the feeling of "I am". The mingling of these two currents of "I am" and "these are" builds up my particular life. Obstacles to such mingling make my realisation of "self" narrow or perverted. On the intensity and depth of such realisation depends the degree of my joy: when it is feeble or vague I am depressed and despondent. The greatest torment of solitary imprisonment is the loss of the external current that feeds the flow of consciousness.

This union of the external and internal currents of our being is brought about in two ways: by need, and by emotion. The satisfaction of need makes for a shallow union that affects only the surface of our life. The union effected by the rousing of emotion goes deeper and wider, and causes our consciousness to become richer, our individuality to grow bigger. It is the object of Literature and Art to gain for us the greater joy of such profounder union, such self-enlargement.

Some say that Literature gives joy through beauty. This point is worth consideration. Let us, however, not make the impossible attempt to explain beauty by analysis and definition.

* From a recent lecture delivered under the auspices of Calcutta University; translated from the original Bengali by Surendranath Tagore.

So far as beauty is manifested outside, it appears to inhere in certain things or facts, which by themselves are neither beautiful nor ugly. The rose has its petals, its stalk, its surrounding leaves: beyond and transcending all these there is some principle of wholeness, of unity, which is beauty. This unity appeals to that which is within us as our own inmost unity—our individual self. There are conglomerations which may give us the impression of wholeness, but of which the seeming unity is incidental, not essential. These do not appear to us as beautiful. It is the harmony between the separate presentations of the parts of the rose which gives us the vision of true unity,—that “something more” than the bare fact of their existence, which is beauty.

This, however, is not a characteristic special to beauty. Any whole that transcends the facts of its parts presents itself with the like force of truth to the unique self in me which transcends the separate facts of my existence. For instance, in the syntheses arrived at by the higher mathematics, there is this deep-seated harmony between the several formulæ from which they are derived, which gives rise to a vision of transcending unity, one that doubtless appeals profoundly to the mathematician. This harmony, this vision, is a source not of mere intellectual, but of heart-felt satisfaction,—a pure joy not depending on any expected material benefit, but arising from the liberation of knowledge into heights above all need.

The question naturally occurs: Why then does mathematics not find a place in poetry, in literature proper? That is simply because a sufficient knowledge of mathematics is confined to a small coterie, being beyond the comprehension of the multitude. The highly technical language of its expression has not been imbued with life by contact with the lives of men at large; and a language which has thus no means of direct access to the heart is not fit for the creation of literary forms. Machines and factories are, on the other hand, finding an increasing place in literature, for in our imagination they are coming to transcend their particular uses, wherefore it has become possible for their harmoniously-built wholes to appear real to us, as manifestations of power apart from their various components. It is possible for men to enter into emotional relations with them, like the love of the captain of a steamship for the vessel under his command.

In our system of Rhetoric, literature is described as emotion-charged words. Beauty rouses emotion, but, as we have seen, all sources of emotion may not be given the name of beauty. Neverthe-

less, howsoever they may be evoked, all kinds of emotion have this quality in common, that they immediately penetrate into and stir the depths of our being.

Man wants his water and so needs must bear the burden of the vessel in which to fetch it. Had the matter ended there, the water pot would have been merely a part of his not-self. But he makes it a thing of beauty. That is not necessary for its purpose of holding water,—but by his artistry man takes away its burdensomeness; that which was merely material transcends its materiality; that which was merely a necessity for him is given a value beyond all need and becomes a part of his *self*. This process has been carried on from the very beginning of man's career as a human being. The opposite is also to be seen, of water being carried in shapeless kerosene cans, hung at either end of a bamboo pole, borne over the shoulder—a picture of man compelled to surrender his humanity to the tyranny of necessity, leaving no room for the acknowledgment of his individuality.

Art and Literature belong to that revolutionary region of freedom where need is reduced to unimportance, the material is shown to be the unsubstantial, and the ideal alone is revealed as the truth; there all burdens are lightened, all things are made man's very own.

The solid earth is a lump of close-packed stone and ore, soil and dust. Round it is the roomy expanse of its atmosphere, from which it draws the breath of life,—ineffable life. From this same atmosphere, Life, the artist, gets in turn the colour and light with which its brush variegates the earth with moving pictures. Thus on earth is seen the play of creation in sound and form, in expressiveness. Man also wants his own atmosphere in which he can have his leisure and his playground where, without being distracted by need, he can express himself in his own creations that do not depend on knowing or getting, but involve only becoming. As I have already said, when outside "becoming" enters into our being, it brings about a corresponding expansion of "becoming" within us, resulting in the play of our own creative activity in art and literature.

Emotions also function in our every-day life, and whether we are engaged in preserving ourselves, overcoming our enemies, or propagating our kind, they give us zest and joy in our work. Within these limits man is not radically different from the other animals. His distinction comes in where his heart longs and endeavours to get rid of the incubus of duty, and with the aid of imagination to qualify for the higher disinterested joy which has no reference to expectation

of results. So we find man, even when indulging his destructive instincts, seeking to raise them above primitive need by giving them a trans-utilitarian garb ; when he goes to fight he is not satisfied with bearing death-dealing weapons, but rigs himself out in feather, or paint or uniform, and dances or marches along to beat of drum or blare of trumpet—sometimes carrying this kind of thing so far that it may even be an impediment to the practical purpose in hand.

Again we find man occupied with the reverse process of seeking images for his own emotions in outside creation. His love wanders in flowering woodland, his reverence makes pilgrimages to river bank, sea side, and mountain height. He searches for the affinity of his inmost self, not in substantial things, nor in abstract principles, but gets into touch with his Playmate in the blue of the sky, the soft green of young grass. Where there is beauty in the flower, sweetness in the fruit ; where pity flows for all creatures, and the self is surrendered to the Highest ; there, in our hearts, we find our eternal relation to the All. That alone I may fittingly call real which has by such relation become my very own.

No doubt man is naturally afraid of, and instinctively avoids, sorrow which means some wound to his life, some loss of cherished possessions. But this is only true, so to speak, of the ground-floor of humanity. In the higher levels of man's being we find him ignoring loss, courting danger, acknowledging no impossibility—for the sake of what ? Not material gain, but for the joy of the larger self-realisation thus achieved. Not only our own, but the sorrows of others have the same rousing effect on our consciousness, whence the taking of pleasure in cruelty for its own sake as seen in children, barbarians and gaolers, to whom higher sources of self-stimulation are not open ; whence also the cultured man's preference for tragedy. Of such need of ours for sorrow I have thus spoken in one of my poems :

সুখের ঞয়নে প্রান্ত পুরান	তাই ভেবেছি আজকে খেলিতে হইবে
আলসরসে	নূতন খেলা
আবেশ বসে।	রাত্রিবেলা।
পল্লব করিলে জাগে না সে আর,	মরণদোলায় ধরি রসিগাছি
কুসুমের হার লাগে গুরুভার,	বসিব দুজনে বড়ো কাছাকাছি,
যুমে জাগরণে মিশি একাকার নিশিদিবসে ;	ঝঞ্জা আসিয়া অটু হাসিয়া মারিবে চৈলা,
বেদনাবিহীন অসাড় বিরাগ মরমে পশে	প্রাণেতে আমাতে খেলিব দুজনে খুলন খেলা
আবেশ বসে।	নিশীথ বেলা।

I made for her a bed of flowers
 and I closed the doors
 to shut out the rude light from her eyes.
 I kissed her gently on her lips
 and whispered softly in her ears
 till she half swooned in languor.
 She was lost in the endless mist
 of vague sweetness.
 She answered not to my touch,
 my songs failed to arouse her.

To-night has come to us the call of the storm
 from the wild.
 My bride shivered and stood up;
 she has clasped my hand and come out.
 Her hair is flying in the wind, her veil is fluttering,
 her garland rustles over her breast:
 The push of death has swung her into life.
 We are face to face, and heart to heart,
 my bride and I.

Stagnant water is dumb, close air is oppressive, and it is, I repeat, vacancy or vagueness of consciousness that is most intolerable for a human creature. When, on the other hand, the consciousness of "I am" attains a certain fullness, reaches a certain intensity, it brings our individual personality into touch with the Supreme Person, whereupon from Infinity comes, in turn, the response "*I am.*" At this level our being rises above all distinction of pleasure and pain into the ineffable bliss of supreme realisation. And, as in the work-a-day world man is occupied with endeavours to fulfil his needs, to add to his possessions, to increase his knowledge, so in his literature and art he is persistently striving to enlarge and enrich the content of his consciousness, in order to raise his soul to higher and higher levels, to become more and more his true Self. To what an empty desert would man's life be reduced if some cataclysm were to destroy his accumulated treasures of art and literature !

To express the beautiful, therefore, does not sufficiently indicate the aim and end of literature. The perception of beauty has also its different levels. Beauty is easily distinguishable on what I have called the ground-floor. It is clear that the flower is beautiful, the butterfly is beautiful, the peacock is beautiful. At a higher level, where Mind sits jointly in judgement, and character comes in as an element to be taken into consideration, it is not so easy to come to a decision about what is

or is not beautiful, for reliance cannot then be placed on the verdict of the senses alone. Whereupon there comes in what may be called the distinction between the attractive and the significant, the latter being the giver of deeper joy. The dance tune attracts by its prettiness as soon as it is heard. The classical melody has a character which makes a profounder appeal, an appeal that requires culture of mind for its appreciation, for the realisation of that which is implied.

This brings us to the fundamental characteristic of literature. The attractive things that we ordinarily call beautiful or interesting are such as are obviously real to us. Merely to express them as they are, would be but the reporting of news. It is for literature to bring home to us the appeal of that which is not obvious about them,—in a word, to make us aware of more and more realities, ordinarily beyond our ken.

Most things in this world belong to the category of common or ordinary. Thousands of people pass along the street, and though each one of them is an individual, they are to me merely a crowd, shrouded in the vagueness of a collective name. To myself I am special, unique. Another person can only become real to me if he is presented on the same footing. This cannot be done through the relation of need. Let me here relate, once more, an incident of which I have told before in a poem.

I was then away in the country, all alone. I had only one servant who used to go home at night and come early in the morning, duster over shoulder, to start his day's work. There was nothing noteworthy about him, either of body or mind. His great quality was his taciturnity. So that I became really aware of his existence only on a morning when he failed to make his appearance; for which reason I found my bath unprepared, my study untidy. When, somewhat later in the day, he turned up, I asked him, with no little asperity, where he had been all this time. "My little girl died this morning, Sir!" was all he said, as he fell to work with his duster. A shock went through and through me. He, who had so long been hidden from me under his servanthood, now came and stood by me on the same platform, revealed in his individuality.

The beautiful carries on itself the Creator's passport and so has entry everywhere. But what is to be said of such invasion of my consciousness by my old servant? By no stretch of language could he have been called beautiful. Nor was the fact that, like so many other men, he was the father of a girl, of any special interest. What

was it, then, that happened to awaken me to a sense of his individuality?—One touch of sorrow had, all of a sudden, made him real to me ! That is what literature has done for Sancho Panza, the servant of Don Quixote, whose existence has been made much more real for us than the lives of all the Indian Viceroy's put together. I dare say that the times when Kalidas created his Sakuntala were teeming with matters of social, political and economic interest, but where are all these today ? There remains only Sakuntala !

Man's ordinary world of reality, so called, is a veritable Milky Way, comprised mostly of the vague nebulae called Society, Nation, Empire, Commerce and what not ; the sentient life of individual man is hardly to be discerned through their foggy amorphousness. Under the ashes of the one generalisation, War, there lie smothered the smouldering griefs of thousands of hearts ; the crimes and horrors covered up by the name of Nation, if brought into the light, would leave no place for humanity to hide its shame ; if we fail to see the folly and slavery perpetuated under the shadow of Society, it is because we are of the victims whose minds it has paralysed. Amidst the vast insensibility pervading these nebulous abstractions, it is Literature that comes to our rescue, by making vivid to us, by causing us acutely to feel, the existence of the speciality of things and events, in relation to our own speciality.

This speciality, this individual personality, of man is the greatest mystery with which he has to do. It begins at the core of his being and extends to infinity. It inhabits man's body, rises beyond it into his mind, and transcends even that, to overflow the very ends of past and future. It appears to range within limitations, but in truth it overpasses them, and acknowledges no boundary ; that is why it seeks the aid of Literature and Art to express itself, to get itself recreated in terms of deathless joy. Such expression brings it into relations of similarity with the universal. Through such creations it sends its reply to the messages of the Supreme Person who, from beyond the darkness of multitudinous facts, shines in the unutterable mystery of the Truth which is Beauty.

A LULLABY

SLEEP: I would silence the nightingale
If she made you stir ; I would veil
The moon if her light shone over bright
On your sleeping eyes.

Sleep: I have blown out the evening star,
And the cradle songs from afar
That every mother sings, the night wind brings
For your lullabies.

Sleep: for my warning finger is laid
On the lips of Night ; she had made
You hers, and alone, I watch by one
Of her mysteries.

Barbara Bingley.

(Mrs. Vere-Hodge.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE THE HUMANIST*

Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis

I

THE humanism of Rabindranath Tagore has two aspects : the actuality of individual joy and suffering in the concrete, and the reality of a world-culture of humanity as its background. Both give full scope for creation, one in the life of action, the other in the life of the spirit. Rabindranath has worked unwearingly to relieve the distress due to flood and famine, chronic poverty, ill-health, and want of education in his own villages of Bengal ; equally untiringly he has endeavoured to spread to the four corners of the world the message of the coming together of the races of mankind, of universal humanity. The Poet is not interested in the arid region of mere abstract principles. He does not believe in the cult of organised patriotism nor in that of an unfocussed cosmopolitanism. His is not the philosophy of negation, of barren renunciation, but a realization infinitely varied in content. Rabindranath has placed his faith in the Kingdom of Man on earth, rich with the variety of human relationships. For man's true freedom lies in the growth of personality, from the life of the flesh to the life of the spirit, which finds its supreme expression in the divinity of Man the Eternal.

II

Rabindranath was born in the atmosphere of the advent of new ideals in Bengal, ideals 'which at the same time were old, older than all the things of which that age was proud.'

That atmosphere was created mainly by Ram Mohun Roy. The Poet has repeatedly acknowledged that the first source of his inspiration was from that large-hearted man of gigantic intellect :

Ram Mohun Roy was the first great man of our age with the comprehensiveness of mind to realize the fundamental unity of spirit in the Hindu, Moslem, and Christian cultures. He represented India in the fulness of truth, based not upon rejection but on perfect comprehension. I follow him, though he is practically rejected by my countrymen,

* I have given everywhere a literal English translation of the original Bengali titles. The dates refer to the Bengali writings unless otherwise mentioned.

That atmosphere was a confluence of three movements—intellectual, spiritual, national—all of which were revolutionary. The Poet's father Debendranath was the great leader of that movement after Ram Mohun, a movement for the sake of which he suffered ostracism and braved social indignities. The Poet was thus born in a family which had to live its own life, and which made him seek guidance for his self-expression in his own inner standard of judgment.

It is, therefore, not at all surprising that the Poet's faith in his own country and in a culture of universal humanity transcending all barriers of time and place both find expression in his earliest writings. At the age of sixteen he discussed the promotion of material prosperity in Bengal, and the possibilities of building up a new civilization through the meeting of East and West in an essay entitled *Hope and Despair of Bengalis* published in the *Bharati*. The titles of other essays such as *The Anglo-Saxons and their Literature*, *Dante and Beatrice*, *Petrarch and his Laura*, *Goethe's Loves*, *Anglo-Norman Literature* and *Tasso* reveal his wide interests at this period (1878-80).

This was the time of the awakening of national sentiments in Bengal, traces of the Poet's share in which are left in a number of patriotic songs of which *To you have I dedicated my body and my spirit, my Motherland* (1877) is probably the best known.

Along with the national movement occurred the neo-Hindu revival in Bengal. The sentimental obscurantism and the bellicose patriotism of this pseudo-religious movement repelled the Poet strongly, and with merciless logic and biting sarcasm he lashed the smug self-satisfaction and shallow boastings in scathing satire in *Boorrations*, *Loud Speaking*, *Tongue-waving*, *The Agitation of Neo-Bengalis*, and in a small group of poems in the *Manasi*: *Wild Hopes*, *Uplift of Our Country*, *The Heroes of New Bengal*, and *The Propagation of Religion*. The anger of the Poet flamed up against the social thinking which glorified caste and child-marriage and the sophistry which discovered pseudo-scientific justifications of unintelligent customs and fantastic superstitions in such essays as *Moustache and Eggs*, *Superiority of Monkeys*, *Truth*, *Hindu Marriage* and in the poem *Love-making of a newly-married Bengali Couple* (1882-88). The darkest pictures were, however, invariably relieved by touches of humour.

Rabindranath was convinced that there could be no real political progress until social injustices were removed. He asked his countrymen if the freedom to which they aspired was one of external condi-

tions. Was it a transferable commodity? Had they really acquired a true love of freedom? Had they faith in it?

Unless we have true faith in freedom, knowing it to be creative, manfully taking all its risks, not only do we lose the right to claim freedom in politics, but we also lack the power to maintain it with all our strength. Men who contemptuously treat their own brothers and sisters as eternal babies, never to be trusted in the most trivial details of their personal lives,—coercing them at every step by the cruel threat of persecution into following a blind lane leading nowhere, often driving them into hypocrisy and into moral inertia,—will fail over and over again to rise to the height of their true and severe responsibility.

In all these discussions he maintained, however, a remarkable detachment of mind, and although he always showed an enthusiastic appreciation of the intellectual greatness and strength of character of the European nations, he vigorously denounced the habit of blind imitation, and emphasized the need for preserving much of permanent value in the traditional culture of the country. In an article written in 1883, on the occasion of the opening of the National Fund, he foreshadows, at the age of twenty-two, his later outlook on the political work of the country. He protested against political agitation being made the sole object of the proposed fund; he felt that the only aim of such agitation was to influence an alien government and had no real connexion with the welfare of the country. This policy of 'begging favours from the white masters' could only foster an infantile mentality of irresponsible criticism and a spirit of parasitic dependence on others. He distrusted rights which could be conferred or withdrawn at the sweet pleasure of the rulers. He realised that the use of English as the sole language of political work effectually isolated such work from the people; he urged that a vigorous attempt be made to awaken the mind of the masses by spreading education, and to create a spirit of self-reliance by initiating welfare work by our own efforts. The patriotic songs of this period are inspired by the same spirit of independence; in one the Poet implored his countrymen to throw away 'the salver of petitions and memorials.'

The appeal of a wider humanism was not lacking in the writings of this period. At the age of twenty, Rabindranath made an angry protest against the forcing of opium on the Chinese in an article, *The Traffic of Death in China* (1881). In another essay he said: The call of humanity is ever sounding. Have we nothing of permanent value to contribute to the future of human civilization? He pointed out that

true freedom consists in subordinating selfish interests to the universal spirit of humanity, while isolation, even in independence, was bondage. In the *Song of Invitation* (1885) he called upon Bengal to take her place in the world of humanity. At the same time he made clear his dislike of a nebulous cosmopolitanism. In an essay on *A Plot of Land* (1884), he said : The universe is present in each and every small holding. To be able to know truly even a small plot of land is the only way of realizing the Universe. In an essay on *Ram Mohun Roy* (1884), he pointed out that the significance of a people lay in the individuality of its contribution to sum of human culture.

III

In 1891 Rabindranath took charge of the Tagore estates in North Bengal and went to Shileida, where he stayed for several years. He came into intimate contact with 'the poor, patient, submissive, family-loving, home-clinging, eternally exploited ryots of Bengal,' and gained a deep insight into their everyday life and needs. His passionate preoccupation in village welfare work which is such a marked feature of his latter day activities may be said to be a direct resultant of his stay among the peasants. He wrote at this time :

I feel a great tenderness for the peasant folk—our ryots—big, helpless, infantile children of providence. I know not whether the socialistic ideal of a more equal distribution of wealth is attainable, but, if not, then such dispensation of Providence is indeed cruel and man a truly unfortunate creature. For if in this world misery must exist, so be it; but let some little loophole, some glimpses of possibility, at least, be left, which may serve to urge the nobler portion of humanity to hope and struggle unceasingly for its alleviation. . . . If there be any undercurrent along which the souls of men may have communication with one another then my sincere blessing will surely reach and serve them.

The relation between the rulers and the people increasingly engaged his attention at this time. In an essay on *Englishmen and Indians* (1893) he pointed out the lack of human touch in the British administration of India. The British rule was terribly efficient, but was purely mechanical and thoroughly impersonal. The rulers need never come into any personal contact with the people; they might help or hinder their aspiration but only from a disdainful distance. And what was a matter of mere policy to the rulers might pierce into the very core of life, might threaten the whole future

of the governed but never touch the chord of humanity. This was his greatest condemnation of British rule in India.

In a large number of short notes and comments (1893-98) he showed how this mechanical administration was creating in the bureaucracy a mentality which looked upon the subject people as less than human, in dealings with whom the human code of honour and morality could be abrogated. It weakened the moral sense of the white man, and debased the humanity of the rulers as well as that of the governed. In *Remedy to Insults* and in *Digestion of Whipping* (1896) he suggested that the best interests of both Englishmen and Indians demanded that the former should be taught the lesson that the latter could not be insulted with impunity. The lynching of Negroes in the United States, the pogrom against Jews in Russia, or the atrocities in Belgian Congo did not escape his attention and called forth strong condemnation (1898).

At the same time, he grew more and more dissatisfied with the activities of politicians which had protests as their sole aim, and proposed that the Indian National Congress, instead of passing resolutions for the benefit of Government, should take up a definite programme of constructive work in the country. The problem of education thus began to loom large in his mind. In *The Tortuosities of Education* (1892) he vigorously advocated making Bengali the medium of instruction and emphasized the need for making education fit in with the life of the people.

Amidst the growing perplexities of social, educational and political problems, his mind slowly turned to the past in an endeavour to discover in the history of India a central ideal for regulating our life and work. In 1895 we find a small group of poems; *Brāhman* (in *Chitra*), *To Civilization*, *Forests*, *Forest-homes*, *Ancient India* (all in *Chaitali*) in which the mind of the poet was evidently captivated by the Message of the Forest.

The forest, unlike the desert or rock or sea, is living; it gives shelter and nourishment of life. In such surroundings the ancient forest-dwellers of India realized the spirit of harmony with the universe and emphasized in their minds the monistic aspects of truth. They sought the realisation of their soul through union with all.

Shortly after this we have a series of studies in which Rabindranath emphasized that the history of India had not merely been one of the rise and fall of kingdoms, of fights for political supremacy.

The history of our people was that of our social life and the pursuit of spiritual ideals.

He contrasted the political civilization of the West which is based on exclusiveness with the social civilization of India which is based on human relationship and co-operation.

The Nation is the organized self-interest of a people where it is least human and least spiritual. The spirit of conflict and conquest is at the origin and in the centre of Western nationalism; its basis is not in social co-operation. It has evolved a perfect organization of power, but not of spiritual idealism.

He rejected the cult of nationalism very decisively, and in a series of essays and sermons (1898-1902) expounded the ideals of the social civilization which he considered to be the most valuable contribution of India. It was the peculiar gift of India to invest even utilitarian relations with human value. The ideal of Indian civilization was the unitary society which was maintained through the social regulation of differences on one hand, and the spiritual recognition of unity on the other. Rabindranath rejoiced in the fact that when Asoka was the Emperor of India, he sent messengers of peace and universal love, instead of conquering armies, to the different countries of the world. The Poet found the truth of India in the spiritual message of the Upanishads and of the Buddha.

The *Naivedya* poems of this period (1900-1) are permeated by an austere spiritual idealism. At the close of the 19th century, just before the outbreak of the South African War, he wrote with almost prophetic vision :

The last sun of the century sets amidst the blood red clouds of the West and the whirlwind of hatred.

The naked passion of self-love of Nations, in its drunken delirium of greed is dancing to the clash of steel and the howling verses of vengeance.

He knew that this was not the way of India :

Keep watch, India.

Be not ashamed, my brothers, to stand before the proud and the powerful.
Let your crown be of humility, your freedom the freedom of the soul.

And know that what is huge is not great, and pride is not everlasting.

Rabindranath reminded his countrymen again and again :

With the help of unrighteousness men do prosper.

With the help of unrighteousness men do gain victories over their enemies.

With the help of unrighteousness men do attain what they desire.

But they perish at the root.

In order to give concrete form to his ideas he left Shileida and started the *Brahma-Vidyālaya* (as the school used to be called at that time) at Santiniketan in December, 1901, on the model of the forest-hermitages of ancient India. Rabindranath sent his invitation in the name of the one who was *Sāntam Sivam Advaitam* :

The Peaceful, in the heart of all conflicts; the Good, who is revealed through all losses and sufferings; the One, in all diversities of creation.

IV

In 1904 the Swadeshi movement broke in tumult all over Bengal. To Rabindranath it came as a splendid opportunity for initiating a great movement for constructive work of which he had been dreaming so long : We must look after our own interest, carry out our own work, earn our own welfare, do everything ourselves.

Of our impoverished and helpless villages he said : It will not do merely to remove wants ; you can never remove them completely ; the far greater thing is to rouse the will of the people to remove their own wants.

He gave a complete scheme of constructive work in the presidential address to the Provincial Congress at Pabna (1907), and suggested that our young men should form themselves into bands of workers who would go round the villages ; give a new orientation to the village fairs (*melās*), bring together Hindus and Muslims in fruitful work ; confer with and help the villagers in starting schools, making roads, supplying drinking water and the like ; devise other ways and means in regard to all matters of general interest. In his address to the students (1905) he said :

The down-trodden and the despised who have become callous to insults and oblivious of even the rights of their humanity must be taught the meaning of the word brother. Teach them to be strong and to protect themselves; for that is the only way. Take, each of you, charge of some village and organize it. Educate the villagers and show them how to put forward their united strength. Look not for fame or praise in this undertaking. Do not expect even the gratitude of those for whom you would give your life, but be prepared rather for their opposition.

His sympathy for the lowly and the despised has also found expression in his poems, for example, in the *Gitanjali* in *My unfortunate land, you must come down in humiliation to the level of those whom you have despised.*

Rabindranath threw himself heart and soul into the agitation

against the Partition of Bengal.* He gave lectures, wrote articles, composed a large number of songs such as '*My Golden Bengal*,' '*From the heart of Bengal, you have arisen in your glory, my Mother*,' whose central theme was Bengal and which created a patriotic fervour never known before. He spread the use of the handloom, experimented with the *charka*, and actively participated in the organization of co-operative societies and cottage industries. It is interesting to note that in *Leader of the Country* (1905), he proposed that a single individual should be invested with full powers of leadership. In his opinion such a step would consolidate the discipline of the people in a personal allegiance to an individual man.

In his writings of this period he made it clear that he considered it a moral duty to fight evil. In fact, although he has no faith in force or violence, he has never given non-violence the status of a cult. His position in this respect is more akin to that of the *Gita*. For example, in an article written in 1903, he thought it right, under certain circumstances, to have recourse to force, provided this could be done without hatred or anger.

Throughout the Swadeshi movement his mind remained essentially creative and positive. In one of his letters we find :

I remember the day, during the Swadeshi movement in Bengal when a crowd of young students came to see me and said that if I would ask them to leave their schools and colleges, they would instantly obey. I was emphatic in my refusal to do so, and they went away angry, doubting the sincerity of my love for my country.

This incident took place in the midst of his activities in connexion with the Bengal National Council of Education, which had been set up as an independent organization in opposition to the University of Calcutta. He was one of its founders, and he worked hard in its cause, made plans, raised money, gave courses of lectures to the students, but was not prepared to support a merely destructive boycott of the official university.

Politics was always a secondary thing with him. His views on the function of the Congress are significant. He said that even if all the political aims of the Congress failed completely, the Congress would still serve a most useful purpose if it succeeded in bringing the different provinces of India into closer personal contact. At the height of the

* In 1904 it was decided by Government to divide East and West Bengal into separate administrative provinces.

Swadeshi movement he declared that the ultimate object of political work was to mould the mind of the people into one.

In the midst of his activities, as the excitement and the heat of the movement increased, Rabindranath suddenly retired to Santiniketan. The Hindu-Muslim problem and the clash of varying interests in India continued, however, to trouble his mind. In his novel *Gora* (1907-09) he laid more and more emphasis on the unifying principle which manifested itself throughout the whole course of the history of India :

To India has been given her problem from the beginning of history—it is the race problem. Races ethnologically different have in this country come into close contact. This fact has been and still continues to be the most important one in our history. It is our mission to face it and prove our humanity by dealing with it in fullest truth. We have to recognize that the history of India does not belong to one particular race but to a process of creation to which the various races of the world have contributed— Dravidians and Aryans, the ancient Greeks and the Persians, the Mahomedans of the West and those of Central Asia.

Just at this time violence made its first appearance in Indian politics. In an important essay on *The Way and its Fare* (1908), Rabindranath tried to stem the impatience which sought quick results through violence. He opposed recourse to violence, not by an appeal to an abstract moral maxim, but on the ground that it violated the truth and ultimate purpose of the history of India.

In the same essay he insisted upon the need for toleration in the face of opposition, and advised the lifting of the ban on British goods on the ground that the boycott movement was accentuating Hindu-Muslim differences and was encouraging race hatred. He described the conflict of ideals of this period at a later date in the novel *The Home and the World* (1915-16).

In *East and West* (1908) he said : In India, the history of humanity is seeking to achieve a definite synthesis. The history of India is not the history of Aryans or non-Aryans ; it is not the history of the Hindus, nor that of only Hindus and Musalmans taken together. He declared :

Now at last has come the turn of the English to become true to this history and bring to it the tribute of their life, and we neither have the right nor the power to exclude this people from the building of the destiny of India.

His vision of the meeting of Humanity in India was now complete. It found magnificent expression in two *Gitanjali* poems (1910) begin-

ning with, '*I see before my eyes the rolling clouds of humanity,*' and '*On the sacred shores of the ocean of humanity of this India, Awake my heart.*'

V

The award of the Nobel prize in 1913 gave him the opportunity of establishing personal contacts with the different countries of the world. During the Great War he joined the intellectuals of the world in issuing a manifesto against war. In 1916 he toured in Japan and America, and delivered the well-known lectures on *Nationalism* which contain his indictment of the modern nations which had become organized as machinery of rapine and destruction. The contrast between the aggressive spirit of the modern West and the peaceful ideals of the ancient East becomes increasingly vivid. When he returned to his own country his thoughts naturally turned to the heritage of ancient India. He felt the need for an institution which would be a true centre of human culture.

In 1918 in his lectures on *The Centre of Indian Culture* he faced the two stupendous problems of India : the poverty of intellectual life and the poverty of material life. He proposed to start an institution which would be a centre of Indian learning for the co-ordinated study of the philosophy and literature, art and music of the various cultural streams of India : the Vedic, the Puranic, the Buddhist, the Jaina, the Islamic, the Sikh, and the Zoroastrian ; to which would be gradually added the Chinese, the Tibetan and the Japanese. This institution would also be a centre of the economic life of India.

It must cultivate land, breed cattle, feed itself and its students ; it must produce all necessities, devising the best means and using the best materials, calling science to its aid. Such an institution must group round it all the neighbouring villages, and vitally unite them with itself in all its economic endeavours.

The Poet coined the word '*Visva-Bharati*' at this time ; *Visva* in Sanskrit means the world in its universal aspect ; *Bharati* is wisdom and culture.* The Visva-bharati was to be the centre of learning for the whole world. Appropriately enough the following Sanskrit text was selected as the motto of the Visva-bharati :

Yatra Viśvam bhavati eka-niḍam :

'Where the whole world forms its one single nest.'

* There is an allusion to India (*Bharata*) in the word *Bharati*, which thus also represents the Spirit of India.

Since the days of the Swadeshi movement Rabindranath had kept himself aloof from political activities, devoting his energies to his institution at Santiniketan. In 1919, the Jallianwalla Bagh incident, however, brought him into a momentary contact with the political life of the country. He renounced his knighthood, "taking all consequences upon himself in giving voice to the protest of millions of his countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror." It was a protest recorded in the name of humanity, not in the hope of gaining concessions or to make political capital out of it. This was made clear by his emphatic refusal to support the movement for erecting a memorial at Jallianwalla Bagh.

After the end of the Great War, Rabindranath undertook a long tour in 1920-21 in Europe and the United States. He spoke everywhere on the need of the meeting of East and West in a common fellowship of learning and a common spiritual striving for the unity of the human races.

Western science was destined, through the mastery of the laws of nature, to liberate man from the bondage of matter. This was not all. Rabindranath was convinced that the West owed its greatness not only to its marvellous training of intellect and its readiness to suffer martyrdom for the cause of justice and truth but to its spirit of service devoted to the welfare of man. In his appeal to the people of the West, he said :

The world to-day is offered to the West. She will destroy it if she does not use it for a great creation of man. The materials for such a creation are in the hands of science, but the creative genius is in Man's spiritual ideal.

When he returned to India in 1921, the non-co-operation movement was at its highest. Although great pressure was put upon him from all sides, he steadfastly refused to join it. He was unable to accept the claim of a spiritual movement made in its behalf. He thus explained his position in a letter :

I believe in the efficacy of *ahimsa* (non-violence) as the means to overcome the congregated might of physical force on which the political powers in all countries mainly rest. But the great personalities of the world have preached love, forgiveness and non-violence, primarily for the sake of spiritual perfection and not for the attainment of some immediate success in politics.

He could never agree to isolating India from the stream of world thought and progress. In the midst of an unprecedented political unrest and excitement, and against the whole force of the current of

popular sentiment, he expounded his own views with great courage in two lectures, *The Call of Truth* and *The Meeting of Cultures* (1921). He said :

It is a fact of unique importance in the history of the world to-day, that the human races have come together as they had never done before. . . . The mentality of the world has to be changed in order to meet the new environment of the modern age. Just as, hitherto, the collective egoism of the Nation has been cultivated in our schools, and has given rise to a nationalism which is vainglorious and exclusive, even so will it be necessary now to establish a new education on the basis not of nationalism, but of a wider relationship of humanity.

It has been said in our scriptures: '*alithih devo bhava*,' asking us to realize that the Divine comes to us as our guest, claiming our homage. All that is great and true in humanity is ever waiting at our gate to be invited. It is not for us to question it about the country to which it belongs, but to receive it in our home and bring before it the best we have.

Our wealth is truly proved by our ability to give, and Visva-bharati is to prove this on behalf of India. Our mission is to show that we have a place in the heart of the great world; that we fully acknowledge our obligation of offering it our hospitality.

Rabindranath founded the Visva-bharati in December, 1921, and proclaimed that Visva-bharati was India's invitation to the world, her offer of sacrifice to the highest truth of man.

VI

Since then he has carried the message of the Visva-bharati far and wide. In 1924 he visited China. In his address to his hosts, he reminded them of those days when India sent her messengers of peace and universal love who found their unity of heart with the people of China. The poet hoped that the old relationship was still there, hidden in the heart of the people of the East, and his visit would reopen the channel of communication. Asia must seek strength in union, but not in competition with the West in selfishness or brutality.

The West is becoming demoralised through being the exploiter. We must fight with our faith in the moral and spiritual power of man. . . . Machine guns and bomb-dropping aeroplanes crush living men under them, and the West is sinking to its dust.

In the autumn of the same year he went to South America at the invitation of Peru on the occasion of the Centenary of its independence, and visited Italy on his way back.

The growing strength of the cult of power with its increasing

tendency towards the mechanization of institutions and the repression of personality stirred the poet deeply. He gave voice to his protest in a number of lectures and essays, and also indirectly in two dramas of this period, *Waterfall* (1922) and *Red Oleanders* (1924).

The possibilities of acquiring money have increased tremendously in modern times. Production has assumed gigantic dimensions. This has led to an enormous number of men being used merely as material ; so that human relationships have become utilitarian and men have been deprived of a large part of their humanity. Modern society has lost its integrity ; its different sections have become detached and resolved into their elemental character of forces. Labour is a force ; so also is Capital ; so are the Government and the People. The repressed personality of man is smouldering in the subconscious mind of the community, and has created a dangerous situation. Faced with the possibility of a disaster, the great Powers of the West are seeking for peace by concentrating their forces for mutual security. The Poet warned them, however, that the conflict of selfish interests was bound to grow more and more acute so long as their League was based on the desire for consolidating past injustice and putting off the reparation of wrongs.

Rabindranath does not believe in systems or organizations. All systems produce evil sooner or later, when the psychology which is at the root of them goes wrong :

Therefore I do not put my faith in any new institution, but in the individuals all over the world who think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly, thus becoming the channels of moral truth.

In 1926 he again went to Europe and received a great welcome in Italy as an honoured guest. He was favourably impressed by the material prosperity of the country, but in spite of his delicate position in having accepted her hospitality he was unable to accord his approval to a political ideal which had declared its loyalty to brute force as the motive power of civilization.

He made an extensive tour in the countries of Western and Central Europe, and visited the Balkan States, Turkey and Egypt. In *The Rule of the Giant* (1926), one of the lectures delivered during this tour, he described the suppression of the human personality as the parent ill of the present age. He admitted the need for having organizations. These help to simplify the application of energy for attaining our purpose. They are our tools. But if this fact is for-

gotten, and huge and hungry organizations are allowed to overwhelm the individual man, then the life stuff of humanity will be eaten up. The only remedy was to restore the value of personality in human civilization.

I believe in life, only when it is progressive ; and in progress, only when it is in harmony with life. I preach the freedom of man from the servitude of the fetish of hugeness, the non-human. I refuse to be styled an enemy of enlightenment, because I do stand on the side of Jack the human, who defies the big, the gross, and wins victory at the end.

In 1927 Rabindranath visited the Malay States, Java, Bali, and Siam, and revived the ancient bond of India with these countries, which at one time were culturally integral parts of India. In 1929 he attended the Triennial Conference of the National Council of Education of Canada. He was the outstanding figure at the Conference, and he roused a wonderful enthusiasm wherever he went. The welcome given to him gradually became not only a personal homage to his greatness but also a testimony of good will from Canada to India itself. On his way home to India from Canada, he visited Indo-China. In 1930, in his seventieth year, he again undertook an extensive tour in the West, visiting England, France, Germany, Denmark, Russia and the United States.

The visit to Russia created a deep impression on his mind, and his *Letters from Russia* (1930-31) give a remarkable picture of the Soviet experiments in State Socialism. On the eve of his departure from Moscow he said :

I wish to let you know how deeply I have been impressed by the amazing intensity of your energy in spreading education among the masses; I appreciate it all the more keenly because I belong to that country where millions of my fellow countrymen are denied the light that education can bring them. You have recognized the truth that in extirpating all social evils one has to go to the root, which can only be done through education.

But he remained a convinced individualist. In his farewell message he told his hosts :

I must ask you : Are you doing your ideal a service by arousing in the minds of those under your training, anger, class hatred and revengefulness against those not sharing your views ? You are working in a great cause. Therefore you must be great in your mind, great in your mercy, your understanding, and your patience.

There must be disagreement where minds are allowed to be free. It would not only be an uninteresting but a sterile world of mechanical regularity if all our opinions are forcibly made alike. If you have a mission which

includes all humanity, you must for the sake of the living humanity, acknowledge the existence of differences of opinion. Freedom of mind is needed for the reception of truth..

VII

The humanism of Rabindranath Tagore has its deeper source of inspiration in his Religion of Man which is the highest expression of his own spiritual experience.

The universe has significance only in terms of human values. Beauty has no existence apart from the appreciation of man. All values have their origin in the mind of man. Even the truth of science is reached through the process of observation and reasoning which is human ; its value as truth being a creation of the human mind. Science can only deal with such facts as man can know and understand, and the Absolute which is beyond the intellect of man can never be the subject matter of scientific investigation. The nature of the universe does not, however, depend upon the comprehension of the individual persons. There exists a universal mind of humanity which transcends separate individual persons, and has an integrity of its own which is something more than the sum of its components. It endures beyond the life of the individual person. It is super-individual, it is the Universal Mind. The truth of science receives its validity by reference to the standards of judgment of this Universal Mind. Truth thus has its existence in the Universal Mind, and is independent of the comprehension of the peculiarities of individual minds which are limited in space and time.

It is not merely a reasoning mind. It is also the ultimate ground of all other values. It is the Supreme Personality : "The God of this human universe whose mind we share in all true knowledge, love and service."

It is the Eternal Person manifested in all persons. It may be only one aspect of *Brahman*, the One in whom is comprehended Man and the Human Universe. But this is the only aspect in which he can reveal himself to human beings.

He is the infinite ideal of Man, towards whom men move in their collective growth, with whom they seek their union of love as individuals, in whom they find their ideal of father, friend, and beloved.

For Rabindranath this is not an abstract philosophical system ; it is a matter of direct spiritual realization. In his *Hibbert Lectures*

(1930-31) he has described his first experiences when he was working in the Tagore estates :

On that morning in the village the facts of my life suddenly appeared to me in a luminous unity of truth. I felt sure that some Being who comprehended me and my world was seeking his best expression in all my experiences. To this Being I was responsible; for the creation in me is his as well as mine. I felt that I had found my religion at last, the Religion of Man, in which the infinite became defined in humanity and came close to me so as to need my love and co-operation.

This idea found expression in the group of poems addressed to *Ivan devatā*, the Lord of Life. 'The idea of the humanity of our God, or the divinity of Man the Eternal' was the one theme which unfolded itself through all his religious experiences. Speaking of the time of starting the Santiniketan school, he said :

I am sure that it was this idea of the divine Humanity unconsciously working in my mind, which compelled me to come out of the seclusion of my literary career and take my part in the world of practical activities.

The meeting of humanity now receives a new significance. It is the acknowledgment of the spiritual kinship of man which is universal. Rabindranath has said :

So long men had been cultivating, almost with religious fervour, that mentality which is the product of racial isolation; poets proclaimed, in a loud pitch of bragging, the exploits of their popular fighters; money-makers felt neither pity nor shame in the unscrupulous dexterity of their pocket-picking; diplomats scattered lies in order to reap concessions from the devastated future of their own victims. Suddenly the walls that separated the different races are seen to have given way, and we find ourselves face to face.

And thus to all men:

The God of humanity has arrived at the gates of the ruined temple of the tribe. Though he has not yet found his altar, I ask the men of simple faith, wherever they may be in the world, to bring their offering of sacrifice to him. I ask them to claim the right of manhood to be friends of men.

I ask once again, let us, the dreamers of the East and the West, keep our faith firm in the Life that creates and not in the Machine that constructs.

*ya eko' varno bahudhā śakti-yogāt
varnān anekān nihitartho dadhāti ;
vicāṇti cante viśvam ādāu sa devah,
so no buddhyā śubhayā saṃyunaktu :*

He who is One, and who dispenses the inherent needs of all peoples and all times, who is in the beginning and the end of all things, may He unite us with the bond of truth, of common fellowship, of righteousness.

THE FORSYTE SAGA*

K. R. Kripalani

THE ocean, while yielding its surface to the influences of the passing winds, keeps its depths guarded against their transient turbulence. Even so a truly great artist, while sensitive to the mood of his times, must preserve in the inner deeps of his consciousness a tranquil poise of dispassionateness. That is why, I suppose, one is always conscious of a want of something essential in the works of otherwise such undoubted geniuses as H. G. Wells and D. H. Lawrence. The complex problems of their age have provoked their genius to such violent reactions that the necessary inner tranquillity has been overwhelmed in a turbulence of theories and prophecies and denunciations. The reader may feel grateful to them for their intense, though violent, interest in his welfare, but he sometimes wonders why their works either stimulate or bore but rarely satisfy, as all great literature should. In this respect the genius of John Galsworthy, though neither so stupendous as that of Mr. Wells, nor so intense as that of D. H. Lawrence, has yet kept truer to its function, with the result that his works,—at any rate, his most important work, *The Forsyte Saga*—, really satisfies. As an artist, therefore, Galsworthy can claim a place alongside of the world's great artists in fiction, as most of his contemporaries cannot.

To most of his readers Galsworthy is known as the author of *The Forsyte Saga*. This fact seems to bear out the contention of some philosophers that popular judgments of works of art and letters have the value of intuition. For *The Forsyte Saga* is undoubtedly the greatest of Galsworthy's novels ; indeed, some critics have called it the greatest masterpiece of the present century.

It will therefore be more fair to him if, in judging this author's place among the great artists of this age, we dwell chiefly on this particular work of his.* But here the difficulty arises of how to explain in general abstract terms the work of a writer whose genius lay in the concrete ; how to spare him the injustice of reducing his genius to qualities when it actually lived and still lives only in characters, pictures and attitudes. Perhaps we could mitigate this injustice if,

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after the manner of the great novelist himself, we could give form to the central conception of this masterpiece, before we proceed to measure its reactions on our mind. We shall, therefore, draw a sketch of the central characters and their relation to one another.

Let us picture to ourselves the dining room of an upper middle class English home in the later Victorian era. A gentleman is sitting at his breakfast, looking—well, all English gentlemen of that class look very much the same, with their determined lips and well-fed faces, almost like the smooth, self-complacent cigars of which they are so fond. A butler is noiselessly and most scrupulously coming in and out.

The master sitting at his breakfast is looking more determined than usual. Like a true Englishman he will not let his manners betray his inward agitation even to his butler. Only an acute eye can guess from the nervous movements of his fingers the tempest working within that stolid, self-complacent exterior. Every now and then, he looks at the unoccupied chair opposite him. His wife, the beautiful Irene, his most precious possession, now no longer comes down to breakfast with him. He bites his lips and turns his head away. He has been cheated. Yes, he cannot help thinking that he has been disgracefully cheated. As an Englishman of his class, he has the firmest belief in the sanctity of Contract. Where would society come to, if people did not get what they had paid for? And what is there that a man of property cannot pay for? But Life, unfortunately, has not the decency of the English tradition, and Life has cheated him of his due. His mind travels back to when he had first met Irene in a drawing room at a sea-side resort. She was at that time the victim of a stepmother's persecution. Soames Forsyte, fascinated by her beauty, had stepped in and offered to take her in marriage. Irene had consented, taking marriage as a way out of the tyranny at home; while the step-mother was only too glad to get rid of a burden that had committed the impertinence of being conceived in some other woman's womb.

Soames brought Irene to his house in London, happy, supremely happy, that he had at last got beauty. He had *bought* her for life. Of course, he never admitted it to himself that way; for an Englishman cannot bear to have things put so crudely. She was his; and his home was hers. But very soon Soames became aware that there was something in Irene which eluded his grasp. He had her body, and it was a most delicately fashioned body. But Irene was more than a beautiful woman: she was the very spirit of beauty. That

beauty eluded Soames' grasp. The more he advanced to it, the more it withdrew into itself. He had noticed this failure, and had been humiliated by it; but the man of property was not so emotionally sensitive as to let his mind linger on it for long. He consoled himself that the beautiful Irene was still the mistress of his home and might bear him an heir.

But then something dreadful happened. Nature, ever ironical, with a wink in its eye, shoved in a third party between these two: an artist, or to be more precise, an architect.

Even before the artist had won Irene's heart, Soames had disliked him. It was a case of instinctive antipathy. Soames, the man of his class, could not help despising a penniless artist who dared to declare that the spirit of English culture was too vulgar to foster real art, and that when the Greek civilization perished, in so far as it did really perish, the goddess of Art was left without true votaries. And now this penniless, impudent architect was robbing him of his most precious possession. For, so long as the spirit of Irene had withdrawn into itself, she did not regard her body as its medium; and indifferently, almost cynically, had surrendered her body to the physical demands of her husband. But now love had come to her; love the most creative of all forces. The barrier had been washed off, the spirit released, and the body brought in tune to the spirit; so that, henceforth, her spirit suffused all her senses, and her senses vibrated to all its flutterings. To borrow the exquisite language of Emerson, her soul became wholly embodied, and her body wholly ensouled. Henceforth, her body as the vehicle and the dwelling place of her love became sacred to her; and she could not allow it to be touched by any one save her lover; although her lover had not touched it so far. She refused to let Soames come to her, and accordingly locked her bedroom door at night.

Poor Soames! he was now torn between two fiends. On the one hand, were his humiliation and fury at having been robbed of his honour. (After all, the honour of men of his class is largely rooted in their claim to possession.) On the other hand, was the fiend of physical passion. So long as marital rights last, this rarely takes its naked and unashamed form of physical necessity, but rather is hallowed as a marital duty. But now that the marital right was banned by the other side, it showed up its nature in all its savagery, and brutality. The previous night, the otherwise respectable and honourable man of property had knocked furiously at the door, and finding Irene unamenable, had forced his way by breaking it open.

This morning, as he sits at his breakfast, he can still hear his wife's stifled sobs as she lay, at first writhing, then motionless, in his strong, burning arms, while he fulfilled his marital duty, and justified the ways of man to woman, and broke the poor woman's heart. And now, the imp in him—for even in such well-sheltered minds the imp sometimes manages to break in—the imp is repeating: Soames, it was a rape. In sheer defence of his honour, Soames the solicitor, repudiates the little, impertinent, invisible stranger. No, it was his right. He simply broke her perversity. In fact, his very honour demanded it. How easily our instincts assume the garb of honour! Is it the compliment they pay to the reality of the conscience in the individual? What a cynical compliment, though!

The imp, however, persists, until Soames rises to seek refuge from these thoughts in his own private picture gallery. For he is a great connoisseur of art, although one of his impertinent cousins had once called him a *dealer* in fine arts. In his picture gallery where hang the originals of the masters of many nations, he walks up and down. Then suddenly he stops before a portrait. His face lights up. He is thinking of those foolish friends who had tried to discourage him from buying that work by an at-that-time-unknown artist. But his judgment has been justified, his taste vindicated. If he sold it now he could get twenty times the sum he had paid for it. Of course, there is no question of selling it, for he is a real lover of art. But, "Yes, I *could* get twenty times what I paid for it, if I *want* to sell it." For a moment, triumph and satisfaction beam on the face of the man of property.

We shall now take leave for a while of Soames, and follow Irene. Irene, the beauty incarnate, the beauty ravished under the rights of property, hurries to her lover's room, as soon as the night is over. He lives in a small apartment, for he is very poor. And there she sobs out to him the terrors of the previous night. When she has left him, you may imagine the condition of the poor architect. The artist's nerves are notoriously on edge. He despises the possessing and the grabbing classes. He adores beauty. And now to see the beauty he adores ravished by the type he despises, and the heart of his love break in sobbing; and to stand by and watch, impotent, unable to do anything, simply because he is too poor to keep her, and support her, not to speak of the divorce costs and compensations, while society, the state, and the church are all ranged on the side of the man of property! With his hands clenched, his gaze fixed on

the ground, he rushes about the streets, like a man half-mad, eating his heart out in his impotence. A terrible London fog falls on the town, the traffic is slowed to a snail's pace, horns are blown. But the lover is deaf and blind. The sobbing is still ringing in his ears.

When Irene gets back to her husband's house, she can endure it no longer. Putting her personal belongings in a case, she leaves for her lover's room, intending to weather poverty and disgrace in love rather than comfort and security in slavery. The architect is not in his room. Leaving her case there, she goes to wait for him on the road. As she stands, looking for him, her ears catch the cries of the newspaper boys, bawling out the death of an architect run over by car in the fog. For a moment she stands dazed. Should she cry or should she laugh? For the moment it seems monsters rule human fate.

Soames, when he comes back home, finds Irene gone with her personal belongings. Half frantic, he rushes out. When he returns, there in the sitting room, huddled up in a corner of a sofa, like a tender, hunted creature, is sitting Irene. Pale as death, and blank with dumb despair, in her look is epitomised all that woman has suffered for ages in the grip of the grabbing, lustful male. Reproach of ages is in that look, and mute appeal—but appeal to what, to whom? The man of property strides in, for the moment conscious only of his renewed triumph, and convinced that even God is on his side, as, of course, He should be. "So you have come back!" Irene does not reply; cannot reply.

But Soames has not taken into account the tremendous strength that lies in despair, that final resource of life, driven back on itself. That very night Irene again leaves the house, and never comes back to Soames. . . . We shall take our final farewell of Soames, walking up and down his picture gallery, himself a picture of loneliness, humiliation and tragedy. The beauty and the love for which he had stretched his hands so eagerly, and on which he had tried to close his grasp so violently, they have eluded him and would elude him for ever.

This finishes our sketch of this half pathetic, half tragic character in the greatest of Galsworthy's novels—*The Forsyte Saga*. Now it is legitimate to enquire wherein lies the essential tragedy of Soames, and why this particular novel stands so high among Galsworthy's works. Above all, we may enquire why it is called a Saga. What has it in common with the Scandinavian prose epics that it bears the name of their class? or, for that matter, what has it in

common with any epic at all? I shall try to answer these questions as I have answered them to myself.

The Forsyte Saga, in the first place, is a gallery of character-portraits, so various, so finely drawn and so tenderly touched that one can only view and admire them as the strokes of a master-painter. In the hands of Galsworthy, literature becomes a plastic art. There are characters who live with us and make us share their lives; and there are attitudes that give enduring form to the delight, the poignancy and the irony of life. Whether it be an old uncle or a spinster aunt, a butler or an old clerk in a solicitor's office, we are delighted with their foibles and share their simple sorrows.

In the second place, the *Saga* is a history of a typical upper middle-class family in the England of the later Victorian era—a family and a class portrayed in all its strength, its stubbornness, its sanity and its possessive appetite.

Galsworthy would still be great if he were merely a historian-artist. But happily he is greater: and the reason why he is so dear to all—English or foreign—to whom literature, as the intimate expression of life, is precious, is that though his eye is always on the English, his vision, at any rate in *The Forsyte Saga*, lays bare the universal in human sentiment and relations. He has taken hold of particular incidents and struggles of particular types of a particular class in a particular period of time, to reveal through them one of those conflicts in life that are universal, in that they might be true of all societies, all generations and all times. The conflict portrayed is a conflict rooted in the human nature, although it has been grossly aggravated by the kind of development human society has followed so far; and although manifest in petty details of everyday life, its scope is none the less titanic, its intensity none the less violent. It is the struggle of the possessive instinct of man exposed to the vision of beauty. It is this nature of the struggle which gives to the book its epic quality. And its hero, or rather its victim, though a prosaic middle-class gentleman, has still the tragic quality of any epic hero, struck down by the ruthless fates.

In Soames the possessive instinct has taken a particularly determined form because he is—this we must never forget—at once the backbone and the victim of a class of society whose tradition, whose state, whose church, have all strengthened and blessed this instinct. This instinct grows and hardens until it takes the form of a psychic shell, as it were, and encrusts the whole personality of man. It can then

serve as an excellent protection. It is then called sanity. And sanity, as we all know, is the most characteristic of all English virtues.

But Life, the great onward-moving, creative life cannot be cheated of its creativity by the crusts and shells of its own particular manifestations. It has in its keeping many mysterious rays which can penetrate the shell and stir the dormant response which lies somewhere in all living things by the mere virtue of their being parts of the same Life. And then the raw self quivers on the brink of the unknown and is held entranced by a twilight into which our sun, the light of our light, seems to disappear, and from which it seems to arise. Anything may do it—

A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
A chorus-ending from Euripides,—
And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears,
As old and new as nature's self,
To rap and knock and enter in our soul,
Take hands and dance there, a fantastic ring. . . .

Now just one of those mysterious rays, one of those Browningian sunset touches is the vision of human beauty. It was not for nothing that Plato, the exponent of that divinely unreal love which goes by his name, calls physical human beauty the first vision of the true and divine Beauty.

And just such a beauty was Irene when her form penetrated the safety-crust of Soames. Some who are too intellectual to be anything but cynical, and who are familiar with the maxims of psycho-analysis, may object that the ray which penetrated Soames stirred only his libido, and that his need for Irene was purely physiological. To a certain extent they may be right. But how explain the fact that even when Irene was in the arms of Soames and was his for all practical physical purposes, even then he felt that the beauty which he sought eluded him? How explain the fact that when, later in life, Soames has married again a young, beautiful and sensuous French girl, and all the voluptuous bliss is his, whenever he stumbles on a sight of Irene all the fortresses of his self-complacency collapse? Indeed, Irene is so much the incarnation of elusive beauty that even Galsworthy, so much at ease with every other character, seems to be afraid of outlining and touching her too much. He brings her on his pages only to leave her, as it were, half hovering on the atmosphere.

She has stirred Soames and aroused in him a desire to absorb her. But the only strong and living force in him is his possessive

instinct. He can feel and enjoy her only through it. His nature and his tradition have crippled his soul and left him no other finer medium. He spreads out his grabbing hands towards her and he misses. Therein lies the tragedy of the man of property. It is the tragedy of the inherent and inevitable contradiction. For we cannot possess beauty. Beauty is like the moon. We may cry for it and spring at it ; but can never possess it. At the best, if we have the mentality of a child, we may be given an object in which it is reflected. By holding it we may get the illusion of possessing the moon. And so Soames married Irene and bought works of art for his picture gallery. But the only way of really enjoying and filling ourselves with the glory of the moon is to strip ourselves of all our coverings and protections, and stand under it, naked as in a plain, and let its light flood us and bathe us until it is absorbed in us. Not by grabbing its reflection, but by giving ourselves to its floodlight can we get beauty. But this secret only the poet, the artist and the saint, in so far as he remains a poet, an artist or a saint, knows. Like Maeterlinck's blue bird, beauty changes its colour as soon as we seize it. He who plays the game of grabbing for long will stand disillusioned. If intellectually weak, he turns a hysteric ; if intellectually strong, he turns a cynic ; and in either case he is pitiful.

In a sequel to *The Forsyte Saga*, called *A Modern Comedy*, Galsworthy describes a painting, hanging in the sitting room of Soames' daughter, Fleur. The picture is of a white monkey. (In fact, the first book of the sequel is itself titled *The White Monkey*.) In the hand of the white monkey, is the squeezed-up rind of an orange. At the empty mangled rind, and its own tired hand, sticky with wasted juice, the monkey is gazing with pitiful disgust. The white monkey is, of course, the modern white descendant of the pre-historic anthropoid ape. Impatient, and sceptical of the sources of life, he has grabbed and squeezed too much the fruits of life. The juice proves to be limited ; and what remains is the sticky hand ! The only revenge that the monkey can take is cynicism and disgust. Rather, it is the revenge that life itself takes on us for making it hideous with possessive grasp. The revenge is simple. Life simply withdraws its value from us, and then life appears cheap, petty and vain. Thus man is proud that he has subdued, broken in, and possessed woman. In fact, he has merely succeeded in reducing her to a mere doll, useful only for continuing the race. For Life, at least its reproductive work is carried on ; but for man, in so far as he has any sensitiveness left,

what remains but disgust and cynicism ! In Soames, of course, this disillusionment does not lead to cynicism. His instinct of sanity is too strong and covers him up again, and protects him all through his life, only now and then penetrated and shaken, whenever Irene or her memory crosses his life.

This finishes whatever idea I could give of Soames and his tragedy. But *The Forsyte Saga* consists of three novels and two long short-stories ; and I would fail in my justice to the author if I made no reference to the two short stories.

The first one, called *Indian Summer of a Forsyte*, can only be described as prose-poetry. It is the description of life's radiant grace, opening on a soul who has not asked for it, has not earned it, and, it seems, therefore, hardly deserves it. It is like a dull, prosaic and cloudless day suddenly ending in a glorious sunset. Just at the end of its tedious, arrogant and colourless journey, clouds spring up, somewhere from the hidden corners of heaven, and stealing about it, break the waning dazzle of the tired sun into such tender hues and shades as make a human heart melt, and as reveal to the dying day the miracle of its own light. It is like a tree that has squandered its sap in an aggressive over-growth. The credit with the living earth is almost all spent ; and the tree stands, a huge monstrosity, with half-withered leaves and a dried-up root, imposing only in its stature. But just then a shower from the heavens falls, and, for a moment, the leaves recapture a glimpse of life's first "green felicity", and the branches wave as though unaware that the sap is dried up ; and it seems the tree is dying with a promise of a fuller rebirth.

Such is the *Indian Summer of a Forsyte*, the oldest of the living Forsytes, and the best of the elder Forsytes, Uncle Jolyon, Soames' uncle. A proud, determined, successful Forsyte, who knew how to enjoy the good things of life up to his last hour, and always accustomed to having his own way, so much so that for years he refused to see his only son who had deserted his wife for another love. This old gentleman is awaiting his death : and with the sunset comes the dawn of his realisation of the spirit of beauty in Irene. Once more the Forsyte shell is penetrated. But this time there is no resistance ; and there is no perversion. The Forsyte crust has already crumbled off, for it has served its purpose. The Forsyte has finished his work in life, and he need offer no resistance. There is no attempt at perversion because life's sap is dried up ; and love of beauty having freed itself from its physiological basis and sex-root, remains itself half-ethereal, and need

not grab beauty and need not stifle it in its burning heat. And so Uncle Jolyon sits on his seat in his garden, and, half-closing his eyes, waits for the gentle foot-steps of Irene, and dreams of her in the meanwhile. Ashamed to disturb such a beatific mood, Death itself is hushed, and comes stealing, as it were, on tiptoe. Uncle Jolyon's eyes close for ever. And we wonder: is it death or new life ?

The second short story is called *Awakening*. Awakening of the first realisation of beauty in the consciousness of a child. The child is the son of Irene herself, through her second marriage with young Jolyon, the son of Uncle Jolyon, and perhaps the most lovable character in the whole Saga. Gazing at his mother's face one day, the child suddenly awakens to the consciousness that there is such a wonder as beauty. And with this consciousness the very depths of the child's mind are stirred. For love of beauty is not like a waft of breeze that comes to us from afar. It lies hidden in us, rooted in our vital urges, even as the rose's fragrance, though seeming to hover around its petals, is rooted in the living seed and the stinking manure. Love of beauty is rooted in the mysterious nature of our libido ; or, even if it is not ultimately rooted there, it can express and realise itself fully only through the vital mechanism at the disposal of the living organism. This subtle connection between the sublime sense of beauty and our primordial urge is beautifully and most delicately—so delicately that many will miss it—traced and followed in that exquisite short story. Those who have admiration for the psycho-analytic theories of Dr. Freud may be interested to know that in his "Civilisation and its Troubles" the eminent psychologist refers to this story of Galsworthy in a foot-note, and pays it a deserving tribute.

HOBBY

Yone Noguchi

ONE who looks in my section of Who's Who will notice that walking is my hobby. Some fifteen years ago when I was asked about my life by its editor, I found that the item of "Hobby" was difficult to satisfy, because I had no hobby that might pass under its name. But to have nothing of it, I thought, it might bring disgrace upon my gentleman's dignity. Driven into a corner, I might say, I put down the word of walking as my hobby. But this walking, at least in England, was supposed to be a legitimate kind of hobby for any gentleman. Especially as a hobby of old men it is healthy, economical and proper. It is true that I know personally a few men in England who make a hobby out of walking. It sounds somewhat spiritless to become one of them ; but I thought that, when walking was said to be my hobby, nobody would spin controversies out of it. As I said, it was the affair of humbug altogether ; so I never happened to think whether walking suits me or not. If you accuse me with irresponsibility, I will say that I only feel small. But when in Who's Who I see many men whose hobby is walking, I cannot help feeling suspicious, smiling in thought that they might be as I am, a poor creature with no hobby to mention of. I know that nearly all my friends are better off for the matter of hobby ; even when people criticise me saying that I am a miserable fellow like a dry herring, hard and tasteless, I have no word to protest against them.

But I feel sometimes terribly lonesome from the very reason that I have no hobby. In the book of Issa's *hokku* poems which I opened not long ago, I found the following :

"Alas, thirty-six years passed since the 6th of Anei when I left my country home for life's vagabonding over ten thousand miles ; thirty-six years are fifteen thousand nine hundred sixty days. How bitterly have I been subjected to application ! There has not been even one day when I felt ease in my mind. But before I knew it, I became a white-haired old man.

How strange it is
That I should have lived fifty years !
Hallelujah to flower's spring !

First day of spring at last !
 Fifty years I've lived . . .
 Not a beggar in rush-clothes !

Alas, fifty years have passed,
 Having no night
 When I danced in Joy."

How strongly I was impressed by the last *hokku* poem, since I myself, like Issa, had spent long fifty years with no night in dancing ! Issa must have been a poor fellow, like myself, who, if he was asked about his hobby, had no other way to answer but with the word of walking. I have had no opportunity to suffer Issa's intense application ; even though I had no chance to feel a mother's great love for the blood's knot was not so strong,—I had no experience like Issa's, to suffer under step-mother's tyranny. Issa, it is said, was turned out from home when he was a boy ; but from my own free will, in elated spirit, I left home toward the western country, where I spent more than ten years. Now having already passed fifty years, I look back upon the past and often think what a hard life I experienced. Indeed, my fifty years were a painful series of fight in loss or gain, having no favourite pursuit in leisure to please myself. I was a miserable creature, like Issa who "passed fifty years having no night when he danced in joy."

I used to play a game of *shogi*-chess when I was a boy, my usual opponent being a son of neighbouring priest, who was a better player, beside being clever to make me irritated ; I always lost the game eight times out of ten, because my passionate love of it made me more awkward and clumsy. With a great determination to beat him during my life, I played the game with him one summer night, sitting on a wooden bench which I brought out in front of my house. But fate was not kind to me again so that my king became almost checkmated, when at this moment of death agony I kicked off the chess-board by my foot, and exposing my cowardice, I jumped back into my house. Never again my fingers touched chessmen.

I cannot understand how the game of *go*-checkers is played, although I have seen its contests so often in the past. While I lived in America, I went not so seldom to a place where my country-men met together in joy or sorrow, and I saw sometimes how they played this game. In spite of my complete ignorance with its rules, I felt some agreeable sensation running through me. How pleasantly the

checker stones sound striking the board ! I should say that the pleasure in their sound was something hard to define. And it was so amusing to see the faces of the players with their special expression not seen in ordinary time, which, as if an autumnal sky, now became cloudy and then clear, or as if a spring bird, now sung songs and then stopped singing. It is the mischief or playfulness of the game that makes a man who is close-tongued in usual days talkative and jolly in mood, or makes a man who is simple and straight, unmask of his hidden psychology when he repeats "not yet" all the time. Since returning home, I have had hardly any occasion to see a *go* contest. Once some years ago when I was living in a monastery at Kamakura, I happened to hear a cool refreshing sound of the checker-stones echoing through the large rooms with sliding screens unclosed ; I knew that the master monk was playing the *go* game with guest. But not wishing to see their contest, I only enjoyed then the rhythmical sound of the checker-stones which was most appropriate to the summer morning. It is indeed the sound that suggests Oriental solitude. If I asked what I love in sound, I will point out, first of all, the sound of *go* stones, then the sound of a wind playing fox and geese in a bamboo forest.

There was a "Chinese Town" in San Francisco of olden day, a dirty extraterritoriality where dusky weird atmosphere obscured Oriental immorality into mystery ; not the Chinese Town of late, but that of thirty years ago, revolved on its axle of gambling and harlotry. It was, in truth, a human garbage wherein Japanese labourers threw freely money, which they earned with sweat. Comparing life with the game of cards, Rossetti writes :

"What be her cards, you ask ? Even these :—

The heart, that doth but crave
More, having fed ; the diamond,
Skilled to make base seem brave,
The club, for smiting in the dark ;
The spade, to dig a grave."

Indeed these are life's cards. A heaped gold, Rossetti sings, is found beside the card-dealer whose "eyes unravel the coiled night and know the stars at noon" ; the dream that wraps her brows is wonderfully rich. We human beings surround this mysterious card-dealer, and stake all upon the cast. This poem reminds me of the Chinese Town in San Francisco of olden day, where I went once to see how life's living blood drips and trembles there upon the cruel board of

reality. I shuddered thinking that we will soon shrivel and die between "There, you win" and "Here, I lose".

When Rossetti writes about the cards flying on life's board faster than a dancer's feet, a pale skinny Chinese in the gambling den comes to my mind, whose long fingers, so cunning and slippery like a snake, counted the buttons on the board with a bamboo stick. I was charmed strangely, I confess, by the stillness in the den, that kept for a time all the gamblers in anxiety. I was, however, a man of whom game or sport was not in blood ; so I never felt to bet any thing that night when my friend took me to the gambling den about which I am speaking. My friend wished me to put down his stake on his behalf ; but when I obeyed him and lost the game, I was sorry for him that fate had opposed me in this new undertaking. How could the gamblers' God have smiled, I wondered, on one who cursed him ! When I gave my friend some money to cover a portion of his loss, I felt easy in my mind thinking that it relieved me somewhat from a responsibility which, however, I had taken reluctantly. One more occasion on which I showed that I was born without gambling instinct, came to me afterward at Santa Barbara of California in south, where I found a shelter from rain on my way of journey on foot. There were many Japanese farmers who tried to kill time with buying a Chinese lottery called "Fool's Ticket". They were buying it in hope that this lottery might change into a wise man's ticket. Being asked by one of the farmers to do it, I chose for him characters of the lottery which, being wise words quoted from the analects of Confucius, were used for such a vulgar purpose as gambling. I mused, however, thinking that this Chinese lottery was not without the suggestion, that in China a sage and gambler live together. Unfortunately I could not represent these two persons myself ; so you will know, without my telling how the lottery ticket which I marked, turned out. Although I lived in America for a long time, where gambling might be a sort of gentlemen's pursuits, I never again put my hands on any game or sport. I never saw even a game of base ball or boxing match in America.

As next thing I would like to dwell on my diet. Being a person with a sweet tooth by nature, I kept myself apart from any bottle of wine. But the majority of my old friends, strange enough, were wine-bibbers or even soakers ; being sober myself, I was obliged to keep a face of pot-companion toward them, and often listen to their wild talk and sometimes chime in with pleasing remarks. A few years ago I bought some bottles of claret which I hoped to drink for my health ;

after spending one or two months to finish one bottle of them, I sent down the rest to my kitchen to be used for cooking purpose. Some friend of mine says to me : "Drink, Noguchi, you know that wine makes blood ! It is pity that you don't drink, that is one flaw in your being a perfect jewel." Whether it is a flaw or not I cannot tell, but my teetotalism is inborn ; I cannot help my nature.

I was, however, somewhat an epicure in my western life ; I went round searching after a good coffee or salad from one restaurant to another in New York or London. I was able to criticise even *tamals* which Spaniards are fond of, or tell you how to make a good dish out of Italian's *macaronis*. Once I wrote the following : "It is certainly a proof of one's being a prig or crank that he is fond of sea-hedgehogs or pickles of chopped fish-salt. The fellow who eats an indigestible food with joy or pain will be one quick-tempered or obstinate. People who cannot live without a dish of taste or food rich and heavy, something like a *tempura* (fried fish) or *spitchcock*, are often the men given up to pleasure ; they are sometimes irresponsible. One who repeats pies already at the breakfast table, cannot be bad in temperament ; the man who orders a toast cut to the size of two inches square, or wants to boil his eggs exactly for three minutes, is a complete egoist."

When I returned home and lived in Tokyo or in its vicinity, I went round from one restaurant to another for a fried fish or broiled eels, and appeared to be a man of special taste in food. But for the past four or five years I have been neglecting them ; to-day I am only a peaceful fellow, prosaic, of taste not so particular, and my diet has no distinguished hobby.

Well, and what about my clothes ? There was a time, I confess, long ago, when I took pains with my neckties or shirts, and was not afraid to spend even one guinea for a pair of stockings. But to-day I am content with a proletarian necktie of one shilling, and wear it at least for one year. And the clothes, Japanese or foreign, which I am wearing to-day, are as old as kitchen rugs ; one or two buttons of them are always off. My old wife worries about it, and sometimes says that such a careless manner in dressing is beneath my dignity. But I am a harmless anarchist who wears a hat three years old.

Now that I have said everything, I must return to the beginning and say that walking is the one thing left to me as my hobby. I dare say that this walking is quite a suitable thing for me at present. But none the less it is a question which I must think about. When I was young, walking was my hobby, and I even took a journey on foot that

lasted more than thirty days ; my walking became sometimes one of the newspaper gossips. But my faith in walking grew impaired some ten years ago, when Robert Bridges, then Poet Laureate, took me round Oxford for sightseeing. I could not walk as fast as this old poet ; my walking speed was only a half or third of the speed he walked. Robert Nichols who was then an undergraduate, saw us by the roadside, and murmured to himself ; "Noguchi, a short-legged tortoise, runs for life after Bridges, a long-legged stork !" I do not know whether Robert Bridges gave walking in Who's Who as his hobby, but I have no right to profess it. If walking may not be my hobby, ought I to correct Who's Who ? To tell truth, even a little walking in my garden begins to be tiresome to me now. If such a term as "Not walking" is permissible my hobby is "Not walking", that is to say, I sit quietly before my table in the dingy study. But you must not take me for a studious person, because it is only that I sit before the table—that is all. Therefore "Not studying" instead of "Not walking" might be a better hobby for me today.



POSTHUMOUS POEMS OF RANALD NEWSON

[NOT many months back we had in our midst a young Englishman, working as a Tutor in English in the College attached to the ashram. Even before he had offered to join our Institute Mr. Ranald Newson had had several volumes of verse published to his credit. We soon learned to appreciate his talent ; and although his habits were somewhat eccentric, he was frank, open-hearted and affectionate and took no time in winning the affection as well of his colleagues as of his students ; while the un-English lack of conventionality in his manners made it easy for him to feel himself at home in the simple, rural environments of this ashram. He seemed of a temperament, at once passionate and intellectual, and while passion gave a marked temperamental bias to his thought, his intellect was strong enough to make the bias active in his life. The result was a romantic pessimism, rent here and there with flashes of cynicism ; an ardent hero-worship mocked by fits of disbelief in human nature ; a longing for love that decreed its own frustration. It was therefore not surprising that while he was not in sympathy with Rabindranath's poems, (for having read them in translation he was unduly irritated by their serene optimism), he was absolutely in love with his Bengali songs which, thanks to his ignorance of the language, left his intellectual biases unprovoked, and soothed the deep, undefined longings of his heart. He was also an enthusiastic admirer of Rabindranath's paintings, whose emphasis on the grotesque and the fantastic in human character somehow flattered his intellectual convictions. But he loved the ashram best of all, the rural simplicity of its life and its daily worship of nature and beauty.

When at the end of his term he left for his land, we were all genuinely moved to part from him, though we little knew then that he would for ever after remain for us a mere memory. In a letter that the present writer received from London, dated 13 January 1935, he wrote : "London is cold and foggy and consequently my attitude towards the works of God is at the moment somewhat critical—almost hostile. But with you I suppose it is still all sunshine. . . . I suppose we shan't meet again on this paradisal planet but I shall remember Santiniketan and our talks there." A few months later we received a letter from his brother, Mr. Edward Newson, informing

us that his brother had died "by his own hand shortly after his return to England." We received the news in great sorrow and appreciated the kindness of his brother in sending us these posthumous poems of a dear friend.—The Editor.]

I

About time God had sense enough to stop
All this tomfoolery of life and death.
And think again—
The accident that made God God, and not
You God or me God. But enough of that.
Better a sleepy tune to soothe the nerves.

II

Bunty in gum boots and a long skirt ;
In her gold hair a feather ; for we sat
Plucking a chicken. Soon the red round Sun
Was gone beneath the pines, and some white God
Threw the bronze discus of the moon
Into the blue-green-sky . . . and bleating goats,
And dogs with dripping muzzles at our heels,
And chickens fluttering . . . and as I said,
Bunty in a long skirt and gum boots.

III

God be praised for tobacco ;
For the steam rising from hot baths ;
For woman's hair to touch.
God be praised for Death's thin hand that puts
The snuffer on the Sun and Moon and Stars.

IV

It is a pretty dance
That will-o'-the-wisp Tomorrow leads us
Through the foul quagmire of our life and death.

. . .

In my dream I pulled savagely at a girl's hair,
And so a new fairy tale came into my mind,
Of a distressed Princess shut in a tower by an old witch
Who pulled out a handful of her hair every morning.

V

Bunty that was my last hope of redemption
Has failed me. . . . Let us talk of ghost-pale stars,
Red stars and green stars shining above Styx ;
And white swans threading watery tracks among
The lilies of the Styx ;
And peacocks flaming on the banks of Styx.
Only for God's sake let us talk.

VI

On the third day descended into Hell ;
Heard Sappho's lyre ; saw Isadora dance :
New stars swam in the green and glassy waves
With silver-fish and gold-fish tangled
In their pale lily roots.

VII

Pink sand, pale blue the sky, a white cliff ;
Great trumpet shells and wave-dashed rubble ;
And Sappho with her violet-wreathed
Loose-flowing hair about her purple robe,
Her pale hand resting on the wooden lyre.
One moment more thus . . . then the falling star
Across the Heavens . . . the Earth's beating heart
Rising and falling in the green salt waves.

. . . .

Bunty, you were a girl
Who would have made glad Sappho's wayward heart,
You with your tresses falling about your shoulders,
Your bare feet in your bulky Wellingtons
Of shiny rubber and your boyish stride
That fought your long skirt as you led your goats
From pasture in the moonlight-flooded woods.

VIII

Call the subconscious mind a deep, still lake.
Dream, the old angler, dozes on his stool
Till sprat or swordfish tug his line.
For instance I fell in with Mair again.
She responded to me in a quiet sort of way.

Later of Elinor who had let her bobbed hair grow
 And wore it at somewhat irregular lengths. She had
 Written a book with a bright yellow cover—a book
 Of reminiscences—at which, for obvious reasons,
 I wanted very much to take a peep.

. . .

“That woman left a scar across your soul,”
 Said Ajit Chakravarti as we walked
 Beneath the mango trees and liquid stars.

IX

You know my land-girl Bunty. That’s her picture there.
 Beautiful isn’t she with her great hood of hair?
 Believe it or not but she has clung against my breast
 And given back my kisses. And this in a world
 That seems the merest freak of chance, a
 whim of the horn’d Devil.

X

Even if I were to spend all the time
 Weeping or raging, yet these hours would pass.
 These horrible slow hours will surely pass.
 The wounded heart will plead no more
 And Death’s cold lips shall whisper, “I have come.”

XI

The green swift fauns
 That steal the milk from Bunty’s goats
 And dance on moonlit nights
 Through the grey woods about her quiet home
 Had felt the warmth of Spring, and on their flutes
 They piped a rambling, wayward song.
 And as the liquid dew of silver notes
 Rained on the black soil, yellow primroses
 And violets blue
 Opened shy petals. Through the woods I pressed
 Further and further from her quiet home
 Though Bunty’s voice cried “Ranald” through the trees,
 Nor paused I till steep granite steps
 Led to the ghat of stars at the world’s edge.

There paused I dreaming of the yellow hair
On which within the hour my lips would press.

XII

Not even the scarlet flames of Hell
Will burn out of my heart the memory
Of the world's only Bunty !
That afternoon I saved her dogs for her
In the green woods and the sunshine.
I praise the Lord God Krishna or what God
Or blinded destiny had led my steps
To where they were entombed : and furthermore
That while I laboured for her, she stood by—
The World's only Bunty with her laughter
Sweeter than sunshine ; and her hood of hair
Brighter than the gold tresses of the Sun.

XIII

Life being what it is—
An ugly, and a brutal, stupid thing—
We have the hookah set before our feet.
Let the World's folly clamour in the street.
The doors are shut and bolted while cross-legged
We squat and smoke the poppy seeds of dream.

. . .

I dreamed that I was back in childhood
And stood in blue light by a dripping water wheel
Turned by the ripples of the Milky Way.
And once a little boat went softly by.
A white and bespectacled old sheep
Sat at the helm. A small girl pulled the oars,

XIV

A good dream last night because I saw Bunty
In all her beauty and with all that glory of her
Yellow hair ; and beauty not as so often, distorted
By the wayward mirth of dreams—as for instance,
To walk with such a girl and presently her nose
To change to cork bark and her hair to small
Black twisting leeches.

XV

"Why, you have cut your hair off, you silly girl," I said,
Finding myself caressing Bunty's close-cropped head.
This at the end of a long night of dreams,
For the most part horrible, distorted dreams,
Of myself newly come from India,
Of Bunty's home at Addington, and Bunty
Who turned a deaf ear to my desperate pleading.

XVI

The land-girl Bunty who would meet the Sun
As the Sun's lover—he and she
With their gold tresses intertwined.
Bunty the Sun girl with her home
In the green woods.
The Great Bungler did his work well for once
When he made Bunty.
She will lose her wildness to marry some damned
bank-clerk.
But in a simpler age than this
I would have had her—would have chased for her
The antlered stag until it stood at bay
By the blue lake streaked with the Sun's blood.

XVII

And one night I went walking
To the small village by the many-winding
River, the Kopai.
The Santal villagers beneath the moon,
That trembled in the copper palm trees,
Beat on their drums. And to the frenzied beat
A dancer leaped
Higher and higher in the tropic night.
And still he leaped and still they beat their drums
More frenziedly, until he leaped so high
He leaped above the thatched roof and the palms.
And still they beat and up he leaped and down.
Thud ! He was smashed to pieces like an egg.
Such tragedies were frequent where I stayed.

XVIII

Was it a dream or did we meet
And walk across the black ridge while the wax
Of burning star candles
Spilled in the ruined niches of the night ?
The pale stars and the blue-green leaves
And Bunty's starlit hair in the grey woods
But what astonished me was how Bunty could possibly cram
All that great mass of hair
Into her rubber bathing helmet strapped beneath her chin.

XIX

So dreamed that we were married.
Our nuptial night we celebrated
On a red sofa in a green jungle
Of palms with floating leaves.
Then we were in the little bedroom
With one small window curtained from the stars.
She wore her hair in a neat bun of bright gold
With horn-rimmed glasses for her great brown eyes.
The clothes she wore were in the Old World style—
Bustle, high neck, and leg-of-mutton sleeves,
That oust the short skirt and the Eton crop.
A storm arose and with the storm came War,
And storm and War raged through the night—
Storm in his steel-blue uniform,
And war in scarlet. Then I turned
To my beloved with her bun of hair
Like a gold drinking cup.
Her face was gas-masked and her heart beat fast.
She pulled on heavy Wellingtons and threw
About her a white rubber drizzle cape
And while she buttoned this with trembling hands
She said, "Together we will flee
Through the fierce lashing storm." But I
Clasped her caped glistening body to my own,
Unpinned her hair, and let it fall
About her shoulders like the sun-god's rays.

XX

Leonard Rafter said of Bunty's picture
That she was like a night of the Holy Grail.
And with her soft hair to her shoulders
It seemed that she was Galahad himself
As we stood in the grey light of the trees.
In the cramped shed at sun-going-down
Our heads touched as we peeped at the wee chicks,
And presently my hand was on her breast,
And my lips on her neck and hair.
And after that she was no more
Galahad. Green fauns among the trees
Woke at our laughter, and the dog-star barked.
And Bunty lit a cigarette — the first
That I had ever tempted her to smoke —
And she was no more Galahad.

XXI

When I was young I thought my hands had strength
To spin the little Earth what way I chose.
Fate has been too much for me
As may be Fate has been too much for God.

XXII

When I got to the house in the woods
And settled in an arm-chair
The shaggy old dog George that I had saved
Sprang in my lap, his eyes all lit with love.
He remembered.
But Bunty forgets things, forgets things.

XXIII

A grim dream in which wishing to make a little money,
I sold five shillings' worth of my flesh to a girl
For her father's meal. Leonard performed the operation
Very sympathetically cutting away two large
And painful half-moons from the sides of my feet.

And then to meet Bunty in a starlit lane—
 I remember still the tarred fence, the trees.
 Bunty had cut off most of her hood
 Of hair, and curled the rest and dyed it ginger
 Because she said her yellow tresses made her
 Unfashionable, or at any rate uncomfortably
 Conspicuous. After the first shock of surprise,
 I was for having her hair cropped right close
 To the head.

XXIV

“This boy Phaon,” she said, “for whom I die,
 With his long yellow hair about his shoulders,
 His petulant lips, his great sad eyes—
 Let me admit that for his sake
 I, Sappho, of immortal fame whose lyre
 Shall be a constellation in the night
 Of ages past ; I, Sappho,
 Of whom many shall dream
 With bitter dreams of love and anguish
 Hearing the story of the great white rocks—
 The lonely, sharp crystal cluster of rocks
 And these
 The Lesbian who stands above all women
 As these rocks stand above the tossing waves
 And ocean tangle of velvet-green sea serpents.
 Let me admit that for his sake, for Phaon’s sake,
 To gain his touch—the slightest glance from him—
 All shames I have endured until my fame
 Seemed but the paltriest bauble.
 Had I scrubbed kitchen floors
 He had been kinder to me—to me
 The darker Helen of the world of dreams—to me
 Sappho, the Lesbian, the poetess.

. . .

And furthermore I shout it to the wind
 With bitter laughter,
 With tears and bitter laughter,
 This Phaon who has shamed me and driven me hence

Into the night and coldness of the night—
This Phaon was a fool ; vain, idle, weak—
As stupid as the steel-horned goats he led
From pasture in the woods when the half moon
Hung like a harp in Heaven ; or the loud cock
Who on a mound of pig's dung hails
The spears and poison gasses of the dawn.

. . .

I die, I Sappho, for his sake.
This blood and flesh and beating heart of dreams
I scatter on the clear
Sharp, jagged crystal cluster of the rocks.
My hair shall drift among the trumpet shells
And the wet sands and liquid silver moonlight.

. . .

So Sappho spoke, nor wept. And once again
She looked upon the visible beauty
Of the granite towers and turrets of the mountains,
And of the fields and forests and waves
That hissed like serpents as they slapped the rocks.
"The river of the dead is choked with lilies",
She murmured, and above the purple waves
The half moon slowly butted.

AN INQUIRY INTO BUDDHIST CATALOGUING

C. A. F. RHYS DAVIDS

IN a recent article on 'Problems of Buddhism',¹ Dr. Winternitz has the following footnote (p. 47): "The absence of the four truths and the eightfold path as items in the Four-section and Eight-section of the Anguttara Nikāya (see Mrs. Rhys Davids in *Journal of the R. A. S.* 1935, p. 721 ff.) is indeed striking. But a closer investigation of the Anguttara will be necessary to find out on what principle items have been included in this Nikāya (and in the Sangīti and Dasuttara of the Dīgha), before we can draw conclusions from this omission."

A reasonable demurring. Let me here begin a closer investigation.

In view of *a*) the wide sweeping-in of doctrines shown in these three catalogues, *b*) the fairly safe conclusion, that it takes some time in the history of a 'church' for a formula to emerge, and *c*) the fact, that the history of any religion is a history of changing values, I judged, concerning the "absences" referred to, that they were due to this or that portion of the catalogue, which omitted, having been framed *before* certain numerical formulas had been *drafted as orthodox tenets* of prime importance.

But the question then arises: Did the catalogues in question profess to include everything that was orthodox doctrine? Or at least, if no profession to this effect accompanies these scriptural lists, is it perhaps possible, that the lists include only such topics as are, for some reason, not 'duly' emphasized in the residual scripture, and are hence sets of so many postscripts to the other Suttas? Even if this can account for the omissions, then we should not expect to find among the included items *any* tenet of acknowledged leading importance, since these tenets would rank as such in virtue of the fact that they did receive due emphasis, and hence did not require to be swept-in after such a quasi-apologetic fashion. *But we do find such included.*

Or were the specified formulas-of-number omitted, because, albeit they had been drafted when the Lists were compiled, they were not then held in sufficient esteem, they had not yet won suffrages enough, to

¹*Viśva-Bharati Quarterly* (New Series) II, 1.

warrant their being included? Of the 'left wing' only perhaps? Not then such as could be "chanted together by all, not disputed about"?¹

Or were they indeed, as I suggested, *emergences in the Sangha's changing values, more or less alien to the earlier teaching?*

There may possibly be other reasons discoverable for the omissions. So far I can think of no other, and it is to be regretted that, in recognizing my overdue discovery, admitted as being 'remarkable', the learned Doctor should not have helped us with his own speculations in the matter. If Buddhists and writers on Buddhism had not for years harped on certain tenets as 'central' and 'basic' in Buddhism:—the four truths, the way as eightfold, the three marks in everything (*anicca, dukkha, anattā*), release (*vimutti*), the three refuges (*buddha, dhamma, sangha*), the five khandhas, the goal as, not '*attha*', '*attha samparāyika*,' but nirvana, or nirvana *plus* three other things (*sambodhi, abhiññā, upasamā, nibbāna*)²—these omissions would not seem so strange and unaccountable. But as it is, they hold up a glaring red-light to such harping, until and unless a satisfactory reason is forthcoming for the 'absence' of such so-called cardinal items in lists, which have the appearance at least of being very comprehensive.

Can we then point to any context in text or commentary declaring, in any of the three cataloguings, a principle of in-, or of ex-clusion? In the two commentaries, I have so far found none. But I gladly admit, that a more searching study may tell us something. If so, the telling will be of the tradition as worded in Buddhaghosa's Pali recasting of the Sinhalese *atthakathā's* which he found in Ceylon. That is, we shall have Buddhaghosa's own view about what he found in MSS. handed down (with an indefinite amount of making of fresh copies) during the four to five hundred years since the first written recensions (as stated in the *Dīpavaṃsa*) were made (cc. 80 B.C.). And in this, his 'own view', he will either faithfully have repeated what he found in Sinhalese MSS., or he will have stated his personal opinion. I do not hold him incapable of doing the latter. We see him *e.g.*, very probably doing it in imputing to the Founder a reason for introducing a fivefold skandha-doctrine, for which in the *Piṭakas* there is no justification.³

A good opening was given him in the introduction to the *Saṅgīti Suttanta*. It is a rarely vivid picture: the Mallas of Pava, having built a new municipal hall, invite the aged Gotama on his tour to honour it

¹*Saṅgīti Suttanta*.

²The First Utterance.

³*Vts. M.* ch. xvii.

by opening it, as we say. The scene is described, albeit the Founder's address is totally forgotten. Verily the 'new men', of whom Ānanda wailed "They please me not at all",¹ no longer paid heed to their Chief's words! Then comes possibly the Appendix, *viz.*, the Catalogue. Gotama is weary, after the laity depart, and Sāriputta (who had predeceased him!) is resurrected to go on and address only the quiet-sitting, patient monks. He is represented as anxious to forestall schisms, such as were said to be proceeding in the Jaina Sangha after the decease of its Founder. He calls on his assembly, seeing they had a well-imparted teaching (*dhamma*), to institute "a chanting together in concord without wrangling, for the long survival of the Brahma-living." Then abruptly follows the list, from one 'single doctrine' (*eko dhammo*) to the following nine more sub-sections of doctrines. But to all this Buddhaghosa makes no inquiry as to selection, and we are left with the inference, that the 'recital' was to include every doctrine about which there was complete agreement as to its orthodoxy. The List is as follows:

One	.	.	.	1	Sixes	.	.	.	22
Twos	.	.	.	33	Sevens	.	.	.	14
Threes	.	.	.	60	Eights	.	.	.	11
Fours	.	.	.	50	Nines	.	.	.	6
Fives	.	.	.	26	Tens	.	.	.	6

170

59,

139 in all.

In the Dasuttara List of only 55 items we can rightly speak of a principle of selection determining its contents. We start with ten *reasons why* certain teachings should be considered in certain ways. Clearly a carefully selected list; hence it should better reflect the orthodoxy of its date of compilation. The things recommended for study are such as "help much, are to be made to become, to be understood, to be put away, belong to decline, lead to distinction, (or eminence), are hard to penetrate, are to be brought to pass, to be thoroughly learnt (*abhiññāyaya*), to be realized."

We may here find food for historical weighing. Thus among the ten reasons the early injunction to seek (*gavesati*) has vanished, and with it that early word for the Goal of seeking: *attha*. Dropped already from the First Utterance (only the negative is retained), it will have come to mean only 'meaning' or 'cause'²). Here are already two reasons for

¹ *Theragāthā*.

² *Hetu jānāti*. Ang. Comm., iii. 283, on the term *atthaññu*.

seeing in the Du. an outlook very far removed from really 'primitive' Buddhism. As Goāl Nibbāna has come in and sits firmly enthroned.

Finally, the Anguttara lists total up to 9557—so the Commentary—and present not a few parallel but variant versions, *i.e.*, where the 'text' of the Sutta is identical, but the exposition different—a very natural result where repeaters have come in from different centres to a Council of Revision, and the judge, or judges have decided that the two or more versions are equally orthodox. But as to any principle of selection in these or in the Dasuttara, Buddhaghosa, so far as I see,—and he is much given to imputing reasons to the teacher—offers no comment.

It is clearly not within the scope of an article to give in detail the subject-matter of these three great Lists. All that I can possibly do here is to cite (as I have partly done elsewhere) the numbered formulas which constitute, for Hīnayāna Buddhists and for most writers on Buddhism, the original teaching, and examine to what extent they find a place in the Lists. But first I trust I may be allowed space for stating in brief outline the nature of the titles under which the various subjects have found admission. If these reveal any principle of selection, so much the better, but I am dubious.

In Mabel Hunt's Index volume to the Anguttara (P.T.S. 1910), I made a complete alphabetical table of these titles. From this we may compile a synopsis of them, thus: Many items are presented as so many things or *dhammā*:—here the Dīgha Suttantas adopt this term throughout in introducing each subsection: *Katamo eko dhammo?* *Katame dve (dhammā)*, or *Katamo eko dhammo bahukāro . . . pariññeyyo*, etc. Similarly many others are presented as *anga's*, as *paccaya's*, as *ṭhāna's*, *dhātu's*, as *āyatana's*, *vatthu's* etc. Of these, only the first and the last three appear in the Ds.

We have then, in the Anguttara, many items concerning the man, mainly in the term that had come in with the worsened concept of the man: *puggala*, there being relatively few survivals in which the more honourable *purisa* is retained. The Dīgha shows a relatively slight interest in the man. It was in 'ideas about' the man, that the scholastic monk-world had come to be mainly interested, when these two Suttantas were compiled.

We have next a number of objective matters in man's life: such as the bourns in his life (*gatis*), sick men (*gilāna's*), gifts, greetings, etc. Then there is a much greater number of subjective matters in values: *agga's* (highest things), *attha's* (aims), *āpatti's*, *ānisaṃsā's* (attainments, profits), growths (*vuḍḍhi's*), etc.

And there is the long list of morally bad items and their opposites: cankers (*āsava* (s), fetters (*saṃyojana*'s) . . . *vijjā*'s), calm (*passaddhi*'s), the former much outdistancing the latter. These are all fairly equally represented in both Anguttara and Sangīti. There are finally things to which man is likened, or the training of him, such as the horse (I do not find the elephant here), mangoes, jars, clouds, etc. ; these in A. only.

For an adequate study, here impossible, of the subject, it would be necessary to enlarge this synopsis from the A., and compare it with the D. lists. One feature in the grouping, occurring only in the A. List, may not be without historic importance. It is this. From the Sixes, there is a beginning of making the requisite number out of two groups of three each: either of opposites: *e.g.* conditions pleasing to the Bhagavā, or displeasing (34rf.), or of things somehow associated, *e.g.*, 3 *taṇhā*'s and 3 *māna*'s (445). In the Sevens this is continued (43 ; 82). Similarly in the Eights. But in the Nines this device is oftener resorted to, and with this difference, that the complementary lists—usually of 5 and 4—have sometimes no visible bond of connection. Usually one is doctrinally much more prominent than the other, *e.g.*, 5 *cetokkhila*'s and 4 *satippaṭṭhāna*'s. And the latter is invariably put *after the former*. I shall return to this.

I could have made these notes ampler, but without throwing any further light on any Leitmotif of guiding principle in selection. So far as I have any knowledge of the Suttas, I seem to find here expressed a desire to catalogue, not this or that, but *everything that there is in them which served in teaching doctrine*. I am open to correction, but I cannot as yet find any such things in the Suttas which do not here find echo.

I come then to those subjects which in such doctrinal cataloguing we should all expect to find. And these are:—

- In the Ones : a) Nirvāna ; b) release (liberty, deliverance):
vimutti ;
- „ „ Threes : the Three Refuges (Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, or
 with the sometimes appended fourth item of
 saintly virtues),
- „ „ „ the Three Marks in everything: transience, ill, not-
 self,
- „ „ „ the Three Roots (*lobha, dosa, moha*) ;
- „ „ Fours : the Four Truths,
- „ „ „ the Four Divine States ;
- „ „ Fives : the Five Khandhas of body and mind ;
- „ „ Eights : the Eightfold Way, usually called Path.

Last, but not least, but not usually so insisted upon as original ; the List called Parts or Wings of Enlightenment, said to have been a special dying charge of the Founder to his Order, which they "should practise, meditate upon and spread abroad"¹ :

Three Fours , the Stations of Mindfulness (*satippaṭṭhānā*),
 ,, Right Efforts (*sammappadhānāni*),
 ,, Steps to Psychic Power (*iddhipādā*).

Two Fives , ,, Faculties of spiritual sense (*indriyāni*),
 ,, Strengths (*balāni*).

The Seven , ,, Parts of Enlightenment (*bojjhaṅgā*).

The Eight , ,, Eightfold Way.

I am not unreasonable in claiming, that in any comprehensive Catalogue, evidently of doctrinal importance, the foregoing Lists, or numbered formulas would have been given right of entry, and be found, not merely as referred to, or, also, applied, in exposition of any item, but as titular items.

What we actually find is, that as titular items they are largely, though not wholly, absent ! Thus in the titles of subjects :

Of the Ones , Nirvana is absent in all three Catalogues, appearing only in the Nines (A.) as Ninefold Nibbāna (p. 453ff.)

Vimutti is equally so, appearing only in the Fives (A.) as *pañca vimutt'āyatanāni* (p. 21), and as *pañca dhammā cetivimutti-phala* (p. 84), and as *pañca vimutti-pariṇāmanīyā saññā* (p. 243), etc.

Of the Threes , I do not find the Three Refuges.

The Three marks (not yet so-called) occur only in Ds. in the Fives, as modes of *saññā* : *anicca-*, *anicce dukkha-*, *dukkhe anattā-*, *paḥāna-*, and *virāga-saññā*.

Of the Fours , the Truths do not appear in A. save incidentally (p. 202) ; nor in Ds. ; only in Du., where they appear with the usual adjective *ariya*, and are to be *abhiññeyya*. The Divine States appear, not in A., but only in Ds. as the Four Infinites (*appamaññā-*, p. 223), not in Du.

¹D. ii, 120.

Of the Fives , the khandhas do not appear in A. But the *first four* appear in the Fours, in the Sutta 'Sokhumāni,' the Subtle things, the fifth, *viññāṇa*, being still reserved for 'the man' who *has* the khandhas. But they are placed first in the Ds. Fives, and in Du. they are also placed as *pariññeyya*.

Of the Eights , the Eightfold Way is neither in A., nor in Ds., only in Du., where it is as usual *bhāvetabba*. But the Way occurs in A. titles in the Tens, as the *Tenfold* Way, while in Ds. we have the 'eightfold' without reference to a Way, viz. as the eight fitnesses or rightnesses (*sammattā*), opposed by eight wrongnesses (*michattā*).

The entries of the "Parts of Enlightenment" are equally erratic. Take the Fours: To the Satippaṭṭhānas, *Sammappadhānas* and *Iddhipādās* is given place of honour in Ds., but in Du. only the first is admitted. In A. not one of the three Fours appears *till the Nines*, and then, as if to make good, the first appears nine times, the second once, the third twice, coupled with a Five-category: *pañca vinibandhā*.

Of the Fives, the Indriyas appear in Ds. and Du., but not in A., save as Four, without 'faith' (*saddhā*). The Bala's appear in all three, and in A., also as Four, 'faith' omitted (p. 141f., 252).

Of the Sevens, the Bojjhanga's appear duly in all three.

With the Way I have dealt. And I would remind readers, that its older form as being *without the 'eightfold'* is suggested by the fact, that, in the last, the Great Vagga of the Saṃyutta-nikāya, not the last, but the first section is given to the Way. And whereas in the Suttas the Way has been edited into its eightfold and ariyan frills, the Vagga is entitled just "Way": Magga-vagga.

The question at once arises: why then is 'Way' absent, in all three Catalogues, from the Ones? Why indeed? Way and choice of it stands at the head of the Charter of the Teaching (miscalled 'sermon'); the whole rationale of the Sakyans' gospel is that by Wayfaring, i.e. by the life, the man can become That Who he innately is. Salvation is represented as "a way going to end of ill." Whence then the silence here?

Decline in way-teaching there certainly was. In *only two Suttas*, out of the hundreds put into the mouth of the Founder, is he shown making the way a matter of live teaching¹. Fitted to be a gospel for Everyman,

¹*Majjhima*, No. 107; *Saṃyutta*, iii, 'Tissa.'

we find the Way here and there reserved as for the culminating step in the progress of the monk.¹ I am inclined to think, that when the eight 'fitnesses' were inserted before the word Way (as I believe they were, probably to replace some such word which had become discredited as *bhava* ;—cf. *bhava-cakka*),² attention became diverted, from the wayfaring as such, to the mental and moral qualities enjoined in the 'eight'.

But there is another possible reason, and that is the way taught as Four-fold. Does Way appear under any of the Fours in this light? Yes and No. Ds. definitely has 'way' as fourfold under both Fours and Eights. But emphasis is laid on the several 'fruits' (*phala*), which were technically distinguished from the wayfaring towards them (*paṭipanna*) in the Fourfold Way. This was because the main thing in monk-life had become, not so much the nearing a positive goal as the increasing remoteness from living over again. As I have said elsewhere, the disbanded Greek soldiers were become more intent on saying: No more land! than on shouting 'The sea! The sea!' Wayfarer's progress is merged in Wafarer's looking back over his shoulder. Neither Du. nor A. gives in this connection either a Four or an Eight. But both A. and Ds., in the Fours, note four qualities in the First stage-and-fruit: that of the 'Streamwinner' (*sotāpanna*) ; this is all. In no way is it a worthy recognition of the great figure of the Road.

Well! Can we, with thus much of inadequate inspection, come to any provisional conclusions about these three catalogues?

I would suggest in the first place, that to speak here of a guiding principle of selection were a mistake. It would not be so *a*) if we were considering a choosing being made from a finished mass of material, *b*) if we were considering the choosing 'church' as an unchanging measure of values. In both cases the fact was otherwise. Placing ourselves in North India of the fifth to the third century B.C., we can see, that the amassing those thousands of Suttas will have been a very long business, however it was done. It was a bookless, trainless, car-less world. It is more likely, that any and every Saying, reported at a centre where 'repeating' was carefully handed on, will have been 'included' in the Stock of such, and only tested as to orthodoxy on occasion of a revising standardizing Council.

It is ~~here~~ that we come to a possible 'principle of selection' being to some extent found necessary. Where several Suttas gave differing expositions of a common text, all may have been let stand ; the A. has plenty of

¹ E.g. *Samyutta* ii, 38, iv, 133, 177, 232, 251, *Majjh.* No. 143.

² *Visuddhi-magga*, 577.

such. But in some cases repeaters will have recited sayings at variance from the changed, changing orthodoxy of the day. And it is there that certain sayings may have been 'turned down'. But again, there may have been sayings, found little if at all in provincial versions, which had come to be drafted as approved by the revising metropolitan centre. These will have certainly 'gone into' the catalogues, often into a special place of distinction. Cf. the five khandhas in Ds.: 'Fives' i and ii, with their 'titular' absence in the A. Fives. There is of course nothing unique in this proceeding as a historical fact in the life of churches. I am old enough to remember hearing as a young girl reverberations of the impressions produced by the Decree of Infallibility of 1870, and even those of the Bull '*Ineffabilis*' on Immaculate Conception of 1854.

When we can bring ourselves frankly to admit, that the Saṅgha and its editorial standards had undergone profound changes (largely in religious worsening), when it achieved the compiling of the Canon or Tipiṭaka, we may then begin to weigh truly the procedure in these Catalogues. They certainly present three degrees of in-, or ex-clusiveness in selection. The sweeping-in is fairly manifest as dominant in the Anguttara. The changing values in the (? revising) sweepers are more manifest in the other two. I am not pretending, that, in A., the sections were, so to speak, kept open for each new contribution to be docketed orally as it was reported. We note that numbered formulas are used in exposition *before* their number is, as section, begun. The Bojjhanga's for instance appear in A. i, 14, but not as numbered; in the Sixes they appear as 'seven'; they come as titular into the Sevens none the less.

But this is not to deny, in the sweepers who revised, not collected, action that looks suspiciously like 'making good', when a certain section, say the Fours, had been 'closed', and certain numbered doctrines had *thereafter become of titular merit*. We have only to refer to the way in which the Satippaṭṭhana's get no titular insertion in the Fours, but get it *nine times in the Nines*, when coupled with a title of five other things, making the number up to nine. Attention has never yet, I believe, been called to this. (Mine was too immature when I was compiling that Index of Subjects). Or is there any other explanation?

How immature is not as yet all Piṭakan study! Shall we ever see any corporate effort in the historical excavation of the Pali Canon? The Pali Text Society is within a very few years of the completion of the task set it by its Founder:—is there any hope, that our successors will rally to organize such a work?

A STORMY NIGHT

It was a stormy night.
The wild wind shrieked
And shook the monotony of incessant rain.
The blinds by my bed suddenly opened
And stray drops rushed in
Like children frightened by the chasing blizzard.
 The deep black of night enveloped the sky,
 And all light and colour were gone.
 A curtain of oblivion came dreamily
 Upon the consciousness.
Lightning dared not flash
But hid itself like a snake down in its retreat.
No thunder pealed.
The wind-gods alone were awake
With angry breasts heaving,—
And I lay sleepless.
 Like the first man
 In the pre-historic prime of earth
 On the first stormy night.

YUVANASVA.

SARAT CHANDRA CHATTERJEE

Dhurjati Mukherji

THE secret of Sarat Chandra's appeal to the very wide circle of his readers in Bengal, is his humanism. Nobody in Bengali literature has had such a varied experience of life as it is actually lived in our country and probably none have transmuted it so successfully into the materials of art. His horizon is not limited to the well-to-do, but extends into all ranks and classes. His metier has been wrongly supposed to be the treatment of the de-classed and the down-trodden only, whereas, in reality, his concern is with injustices wherever they prevail. The castigation of wrongs perpetrated by the rich over the poor, the male over the female, the virtuous over the sinner, the upper castes over the lower has been impartially meted out by this eminent critic of the existing social order. His standpoint has always been the basic human values.

The methods adopted by him can be summed up in one word, irony. The essence of irony is a covert critical attitude towards modes of life and belief. It may take various forms. The highest, of course, is the tragic one, as in Greek drama, where the audience is assisted either by the chorus or by a previous knowledge of the end of the story, not shared by the characters themselves, to estimate the worth of their struggle against the inexorable workings of Fate. The force of the criticism is brought out in the tragic situations. In fiction or in modern drama the story is to be unfolded and the interest kept up. As such no former acquaintance can be postulated, but the situational irony has to be discovered. Another variety of irony, probably a looser one, is that which instead of being concentrated in critical predicaments runs through the pages or the talk and becomes a style of writing. It may as well be called a running commentary of life by the author who has substituted himself for the audience or the reader. In a short story, the double meaning is suddenly revealed, but in a novel it is crawlingly incipient and comes out clearly only in tense situations, particularly through dialogues, and even in eloquent reticences. Sarat Chandra knows that the secret of dramatic pauses and dialogues is control. His characters may be said to be almost consciously exercising moral control all along, and nowhere more so than in those situations where his readers expect lapses. The language hovers

over the brink of exposure. When it topples over, irony yields to righteous indignation, a quality more worthy of prophets than of artists. Sarat Chandra uses all varieties of irony except the first. Their usefulness for our society is universally admitted.

Along with the exposure of the cant that dwells safe in sanctimony, there is a dramatic reversal of customary situations in Sarat Chandra's irony in order that the potencies of genuine human relationships might get a chance to flourish untrammelled. The exposure is not fierce, for Sarat Chandra has not the intolerance of the intellectual, but it is often made effective by one short sentence that rings out clear and true, as it is wrung from the depths of genuine feeling. Unlike a revolutionary, who is too fanatically serious to be genuinely ironical, Sarat Chandra believes that the heart of the social order is sound and men and women can live honestly by it if only the excrescences are removed. His early efforts were directed towards the latter task, his later ones have been towards the former end.

The language he wields is perfect to his purpose. It is clear, precise and forceful. The twist in his sentences is just suggestive, and in dialogues it attains dramatic qualities. He has steered clear of the colloquial and nowhere would he soar into the poetical. The right altitude is always struck by him and his readers are braced up in the crisp atmosphere of his language. In the descriptive passages as well, he makes them feel not so much the elemental qualities of nature as those which are common to man and nature alike. One would never call him anthropocentric, yet his nature has the human feel about it. To an ironist, the strictly scientific approach of the realist is a strange abstraction. But poetising as well is his taboo.

A humanist who works by the method of irony and social criticism is likely to have different canons of craftsmanship. He cannot detach himself sufficiently from the life of the plains to live happily in the Axel's Castle. Remaining in the plains, he cannot be contemptuous of the common modes of living. For him art is no substitute for life. The interest in life is more absorbing than the business of weaving art patterns. If he chooses still to be an artist, he would take the essay-form for ventilating his criticisms and the story-form to concentrate his sentiments. If he drifts into the novel, he would not think of it as a problem of geometry but keep it as inconclusive as this living itself. He would introduce big doses of sociological analysis to keep the interest going. Thus it is that art is a derivative function with Sarat Chandra and his novels are not such



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Sarat Chandra Chatterji

that Q.E.D's could be written at their end. To equate art with criticism of life, to hold the former inferior to the latter, as a genuine humanist is sure to do, one has to pay penalties. This is only one way of saying that Sarat Chandra's novels are problematic and share the openness of all real and true problems, and that his stories and essays are well cut gems to satisfy the connoisseur. But in this haven of literature there are many mansions, and they are tenanted by all sorts of people, besides connoisseurs, who pursue their even tenour of existence and yet revolt at wrongs. Futile men they are, but not hollow ones, hence there is mild tragedy in their very quotidianness and hope in their dissent. Sarat Chandra is their novelist.

No artist can in the name of art shun all responsibility for showing the way out of problems. Much less a writer with such an attitude and such a method. His humanism should reconstruct and his irony must be more than merely negative captiousness. The type of western humanism, with which we have been familiar, was built upon a naive faith in reason and science. i.e. in their capacity to build the world anew, freed from its prejudices and imperfections. It did not succeed in checking the spate of unreason, nor could it even remove the wreckage that it was responsible for. The fact is that rational and scientific humanism cannot keep the affections of its adherents for long. In order to do so, probably religion is necessary ; failing which, certain sentiments having the flavour of old order may be commandeered. Sarat Chandra is not a religious man, he had abjured orthodoxy from the days of his boyhood. He must needs fall back upon old-world virtues. This inward deficiency of humanism has been responsible for what may appear to be a *volte-face* in his recent novels, where he seems to be defending the old order including its prejudices. But, in reality, he has been compelled to seek the old order, for an acute man that he is, he has found the limitations of a mere positivistic love of humanity.

Probably, Sarat Chandra could have discovered a path out, if it were not barred by a non-literary order. He was drifting towards one type of Socialism. His conception of Socialism was pre-Marxist and had little to do with the materialistic interpretation of the historic process, with the class conflict or the dictatorship of the proletariat. Sarat Chandra offered no philosophy of the social process, no picture of the future order. His socialism was only an extension of his strong feeling against injustice ; as such, only illustrated the qualities of his heart. How far they could be supplemented by an intellectual system

in course of time is a matter of speculation indeed, yet a passing doubt may be entertained that Sarat Chandra's valedictory picture of our ancient virtues is just a moral consequence of Pax Britannica. A better reason probably is that Sarat Chandra is an artist who is in love with his humanism. The charge of sentimentality framed against him, is in reality compensatory of the inward deficiency of his point of view and his method. An artist who has abjured the old religion and is weaned away from Socialism – the new one, is usually left high and dry. An unrelated individual is a limited liability.

Sarat Chandra's heroes and heroines are all unrelated. This remark may sound paradoxical but it is none the less true. What is worse, it may even appear contradictory to a previous statement that Sarat Chandra knows our social life, particularly of the villager, as well as anybody who has settled there with sympathy and good will. It is undeniable, however, that many of his priceless characters come from the city and settle in the villages. They mean to understand the village-life and improve it and yet cannot establish live contact and so come away. Srikanta who is his most living male character, is by nature incapable of settling down, in fact he avoids relationship with Rajluxmi. All the tragic moments of Srikanta are registered in connection with his will to leave her and remain himself. Rajluxmi behaves likewise and suffers poignantly. The different parts of this great book are nothing but the elaboration of the different reasons for letting each other follow the urge of individuality. Sarat Chandra's most lovable heroes are vagabonds. They are independent of social bonds and stand on the strength of their discrete humanity. Their affections flow out from inside and nowhere do they subscribe to the forms of conduct which prescribe affections. If those who come in touch with them are filled by love for them, it is more by the plenitude of that sympathy which flows out spontaneously from the hearts of these lonely men than by any extraordinary quality of the social bond. These wastrels are not merely eccentrics, they are characters bright, strong and complete, but isolated from the social context. His heroines are equally independent. The living ones among them have erred. It may be because of the fact, that in fictions the errant ones only rivet our attention. But with equal force may it be asserted that in our society, to-day, living characters, even among women, are those who are bold enough to err. Be that as it may, Sarat Chandra's heroines have cut themselves away from their social moorings. Call them sinners if you like, but except in one later piece, none of them

are repentant. They have inward moral courage to go upon. If Rajluxmi keeps a guru, the force of tradition alone is proved. But she too gives him up and along with him, all the paraphernalia of religious consolation. If Abhaya, Kiranmoyee and even Rajluxmi pine for love, then that love is not the synonym of woman's wile or another name for making a virtue of necessity: it is the story of an upward movement into another plane where relatedness will have been replaced by that freedom which is the continuous initiative for sympathetic understanding. Sarat Chandra in his treatment of love is not emotional at all. By love he means true understanding between two individuals emotionally related to each other. But in as much as much of this understanding is social in its context, a successful treatment of love would involve a portrayal of the social process that builds up the freedom of love. Sarat Chandra is too keenly conscious of the social opposition to be able to mete equal justice to the positive contribution of society towards normal love. When he attempts it he becomes only orthodox.

His unrelated individualism is again responsible for his trenchant criticism of Palli-Samaj, i. e. village-life. He is fully conscious of its defects, its narrowness and its other soul-killing properties. Sarat Chandra's conclusion seems to be that the village-community in the name of corporate life circumscribes the budding person and cannot be reconstructed. The plans of a reconstructed order he lays outside the village, nay outside the shores of Bengal, in Burma. His own first hand knowledge of that province, where custom has not yet begun to rule among the Bengali settlers in the fringes, is not the only reason for his lively descriptions of their milieu. Sarat Chandra is driven to Burma by that inner necessity which drives Tagore out of India. There he can breathe freely, the mortmain of traditions is lifted from his creative abilities and he gets the license to create. He constructs unrooted characters there, and the modern young Bengali reader, unrooted that he is, loves those characters. If Sarat Chandra cannot evolve a social order there, blame his humanism, which is not based upon a knowledge of the historical process, but built only, but solidly, upon the moral virtues of an individual, particularly his isolating self-control. These individuals do not belong here, they hang in the middle air, but rich in all the colours of humanity except in those of sociality. No wonder, that they look ironical in their partial detachment. They are so many sentinels in the watch-tower, away from the hub of the shore. They are not the common men and women, with all their edges

blunted by conformities, but out of the run of the pedestrian order, somewhat abnormal, because they are unsocial.

Yet, from one point of view, such has been the tradition of the history of Bengali fiction. Prattlers of art forms will not recognise their connexion with the social background of our literature. Middle-class in their origins, our novelists could not but be individualists. Our family life, our village communities, our caste-system and above all, our political condition could not satisfy these choice spirits and they took shelter under liberalism and individualism. They have always been protestants, non-conformists, dissenters and reformists. Their was an artificial situation and the best was sought to be made of it. Bankim would escape it through romance, Tagore would breathe the free air of internationalism, and Sarat Chandra would be entrenched in humanism. But individualists they must always remain. Sarat Chandra belongs to the grand tradition of our literature. He is not a realist ; in our country no artist can ever be so. You can be a realist in your observations, but the moment you come to values—and literature is a judgment upon observations and not merely their record—you bid adieu to realism and come to sentiments, either retrospective or introspective, as the prospective ones are all political. Retrospective sentiments are too orthodox and introspection is the only alternative. The social perspective moves away from one who is thus forced to look inward. Thus do our artists use an abstract language in which the concreteness of situations is not reflected in new phrases and idioms. Sarat Chandra, though an individualist, uses the abstract language of his predecessors, of course, in a modified form. He seeks to save repetition by irony, and rescues his sentiments by broadening their base, for his appeal extends to the lower middle class as well. He very often succeeds ; where he does not, sentiments go out of focus and become sentimentalities, irony loses its sting and becomes social criticism. But his success as in *Srikanta* or in *Sati*, is undoubted. On his best, he bears comparison with great names of any country.

Sarat Chandra's influence on Bengali culture has been profound for that very humanism and that very irony. Quite apart from his fictional progeny, who are a legion, the entire literate womankind of Bengal has been affected by him. He has been charged with the spoiling of their 'morals'. Statistics about our women are lacking, excepting probably their mortality at child birth. Therefore the charge cannot be proved or disproved. But if impressions count for anything, the sense of dignity which the modern Bengali girl possesses, her

courage of conviction, wherever it is found, the increase in her status, in short, the heightening of her prestige is to a great extent traceable to Sarat Chandra's powerful advocacy of her cause. He has advocated other causes as well, but this has been won. Past history was propitious, the Brahmo movement, education, economic forces and other social and personal agencies had no doubt been at work. But without Sarat Chandra, the women's movement, like many another, would have been lost. Our women are indebted to him and admire his works. They are not always good judges of art-forms, but they do not commit mistakes about genuineness of feeling. Our women too are ironists, by compulsion and repression.

To-day Bengal is proud of Sarat Chandra, she will continue to cherish him so long as heart speaks out to the heart. Bengal has had a great tradition in humanism. Its emotional and religious sides have been exaggerated to the detriment of the intellectual and the volitional. To-day a new problem has arisen ; this literature of ours has ceased to be a human bond of union between the Hindus and the Mohammedans. Sarat Chandra's genius, on his own statement, will be applied to its solution. We can think of two solutions—first the economic and then the human. Sarat Chandra calls them literary and economic. Would to God that the literary solution is finally effective ! We fear that humanism based merely upon love and sympathy, will not prove equal to the stupendous undertaking. For the which, the real conflict of interests between the two communities has to be resolved on the plane that they do exist. One who believes in the fundamental or a natural harmony of interests, as Sarat Chandra does, will have to face unknown dangers and difficulties. In any case, Sarat Chandra has at last openly admitted that literature is a means to a better life. That may be a great loss to art, but a great gain to life. His humanism has shown itself clearly at last, for what it is worth. It is likely to meet its severest test in the task he has laid before himself.

SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY*

(*Last chapter of "A Diary of the Five Elements"*†)

Rabindranath Tagore

A great discussion had been going on between Vyom and Khiti about the origin and end of Science. Turning to me, in order to draw us in, Vyom said :

"Though science cannot but have arisen out of the faculty of curiosity which is natural to man, yet I doubt whether his curiosity was ever exactly out in quest of it : the nature of its hankering was rather thoroughly unscientific. It started to hunt for the Touchstone, but unearthed what turned out to be the decayed great-toe of some extinct monster. It wanted to find Alladin's Lamp, but got a box of matches. Alchemy it really pursued, Chemistry was an unlooked-for achievement. It cast its net into the skies for Astrology, but drew out Astronomy. This curiosity of ours, I am sure, does not pine to discover more and more instances of the order of nature ; it does not rejoice in counting up further and further links in the chain of natural law. What it is after is a break in that chain. Its hope is, some day, somewhere, to light upon a heaven where the interminable repetition of cause and effect does not hold undisputed sway. It is anxious to behold the New,—something that never happened before. But old man Science dogs its steps, making out the fresh to be stale, showing that the rainbow is but an enlarged edition of the colours seen through the prism, proving that the way of the world belongs to the same class as the fall of the apple.

"We have now-a-days cultivated the habit of expressing wonder and delight at the discovery that the self-same laws that apply to the dust at our feet prevail everywhere throughout infinite space and time ; but this delight does not come naturally to us. When man sent out the Sprite of Inquiry, as his messenger into the boundless starry spaces, he was inspired by the fond hope that there at least, in those regions of immense light and immense darkness, the rules binding on dust do *not* hold, that some marvellous festival of divine anarchy would there be revealed. But now he has come to see that sun, moon and

* Translated from the original Bengali by Surendranath Tagore.

† See footnote under the article "Laughter" in the last number of the Quarterly.

stars,—the constellations of the Seven Rishis, the Divine Twins, and fateful Orion with his flaming sword,—all of them are but elder brothers and sisters of our familiar heaps of dust. The enjoyment of such a conclusion is an acquired taste, not in our original composition.”

“You are not far wrong,” agreed Samir. “The natural man has an unconquerable yearning for the Touchstone and the Wonderful Lamp. Take the fable we were told in our childhood of how the farmer, on his death-bed, bequeathed to his sons the treasure buried in his fields ; and how, for all their digging, the poor fellows found no hidden treasure, but were rewarded instead with an increase of crops ! What child, who is really a child, can help feeling aggrieved at this denouement ? Crops are raised by hard-working rustics all over the world, but the hidden treasure none of them find,—just because it is hidden. This treasure is something that has escaped all-pervading cause and effect ; it is an exception from the inevitable ; that is why it is so poignantly desired by man. Whatever old Aesop may insinuate, there can be no doubt that those farmer’s sons did not feel properly grateful to their father.

“Do we not see every day how lightly the ordinary man holds the pretensions of science ? If a doctor is conspicuously successful in curing his patients, we say he has a *gift* that way ; we cannot accept the thought, that his cures are wrought by application of scientific method, as enough of an explanation ; we find it necessary to import the idea of a mysterious knack, surpassing medical science, before our mind can be satisfied.”

“The reason is,” I added, “that though natural law pervades all space and time, it is nevertheless limited, because it cannot swerve by a hair’s breadth from its assigned course,—that is, in fact, why it is called a law, and that is why it offends man’s inborn sensibilities. We do not expect extraordinary cures from mere medical science,—there are so many maladies admittedly beyond its powers. But the scope of the *gift* of healing has not yet been so definitely determined as to drive a hard and fast line beyond which our hope and imagination may not range. For the same reason, the drugs of the pharmacopoeia are less alluring than the simples offered by our wandering ascetics, for these set no rigorous limits to our expectations of their efficacy.

“As man’s knowledge of facts increases, the oftener does he knock up against the rigid barrier of natural law around him, the narrower becomes the free expanse which was originally open to his spirit, the more strictly have the flights of his original curiosity to be curtailed.

Thereupon he is led to put the dictator, Nature, with its law and order, on the throne, and at first reluctantly, but afterwards, by force of habit, loyally to accord it his full submission."

"That," interrupted Vyom, "is not genuine, but faked loyalty,—wanting its reward. Once convinced that the business of the world is hopelessly bound by inviolable rules, we have to humbly comply with them for dear life ; we cannot but lose the courage to put our reliance on the uncertain possibilities that lie beyond science. And, even if we still occasionally resort to charms, or amulets, or holy water, we ticket them with some spurious scientific label, such as magnetism or hypnotism, to keep up appearances."

"All the same, there is a fundamental reason underlying our greater attraction for what is outside, than what is within the rules. For, at least one part of our being is not subject to any law of nature—and that is our Will. Our Will is free,—anyway, we feel it to be free. Will has a desire for Will. So it warms our heart to find its counterpart in the outside world. To be provided with comforts is not enough for us : we are not truly comforted unless we are assured that they are the outcome of a will to comfort us. When we used to believe that Indra was showering rain, Marut causing the breezes to blow, Agni vouchsafing light, these favours were, for us, a matter of high gratification. Now we believe that sunshine and storm have nothing to do with favour or frown of divinity, nor are they dependent on the deserts of the recipient, but occur simply according to certain unalterable laws ; that when the water-drops in the sky encounter a chilling blast, they come down regardless of consequences, whether it be on the shaven pate of a saint, to afflict him with a cold, or on the cucumber patch of a scoundrel, to give him undeserved abundance. By dint of our devotion to science, we have accustomed ourselves to this idea, but do we really relish it ?"

"In a word," I continued, "where formerly we inferred the intervention of certain external Wills, we now assume the operation of blind laws. That is why the view from a merely scientific standpoint discloses a universe utterly devoid of all desire and joy. But, so long as desire and joy reign within our own selves, we cannot help feeling their existence within the outside world as well,—if not located where we once thought them to be, but nevertheless established within its inner, its inmost recesses. If we are not convinced of this, we are traitors to our own innermost consciousness. That there is no absolute standard, anywhere, of the freedom we feel within us, is what our soul

refuses to believe. Our spirit cannot live unless our will can find its support in the universal Will, our love get its response from the universal Love."

Said Samir: "The great wall of natural law that surrounds creation may be ever so much bigger and stronger than the Great Wall of China; but there is that little rift in it, somewhere in the nature of man. Looking through this, we have made our grandest discovery,—we have had a vision of the boundless freedom beyond. With this realm, through this rift, we have been holding loving communication; through it beauty and joy keep flowing in to us. That is why, for all its endeavour, science has never succeeded in encompassing within its formula this Beauty and Joy."

At this point Srotaswini came in, saying: "Can you guess the fate that has overtaken Dipti's music book, which she made you hunt all over the place for?"

"No," said Samir, "I give it up."

"It's a rat," exclaimed Srotaswini, "that's the culprit. He cut it up into tiny pieces with which he has littered the piano strings. What good this disinterested destruction has done him, I can't imagine."

"The rat who did it," replied Samir, "is evidently a rampant scientist of Ratdom. His prying inquisition must have led him to suspect some connection between musical notation and pianoforte wires, and so he spent a wakeful night testing his theory, trying to get to the bottom of the wonderful melodies that now and again invade his ears. His keen teeth exhaustively analysed the paper, while his restless paws eagerly experimented with its pieces, putting them into various juxtapositions with the wires. Now that he has finished cutting up the music book, he will start on the piano strings, and end with the sounding board, whereupon through the gaps of his own make, he will insert the tip of his nose and the edge of his curiosity, little recking how he is thrusting all hope of getting at any melody further and further away."

"At length," I concluded by way of summing up, "some neo-rats, afflicted with modernism, may perhaps found a school of thought proclaiming that paper is paper, wire is wire, and that the tradition of certain sensitive creatures having contrived to create a joy-giving connexion between the two, is an absurd old myth originally invented by the Hindus. The only good result from it, they will concede, has been the impetus given to our toothful scrutiny into the specific hardness of paper, wire and wood."

“And yet, while these sceptic rodents are as busy as ever with their indefatigable gnawing, strains of disturbing melody will continue occasionally to assail their ears,—for the moment giving them wistful pause. What on earth can it mean? They will deliberate. A mystery? Be it so; but, after all, a mystery that is bound to be unravelled with the incessant increase of our gnaw-ledge!”



ETCHING (DRY POINT)

Nandalal Bose

LEISURE AND THE MODERN YOUTH IN THE WEST AND THE EAST*

Amiya C. Chakravarty

IN order to indicate what the right use of leisure should be, it is necessary to consider the nature of the ideal life, the totality of our work and social activities that we may consider it to be our objective. I shall try here, briefly, to approach the ideal from the standpoint of the youth in modern India.

There is a kind of leisure which even at its best would be merely a physical condition. It could be either the necessary pause between work and work which the body and the mind require, and it could be a restorative period which might add new energy and interest with which to tackle strenuous activities. Both these kinds of leisure are vitally necessary ; and since, with all living beings, we need rest for the body, leisure must be arranged and organized with a scientific understanding of the human system. The mental need of leisure is again close to the physical need in that the mind as well as the body functions according to strict limits and laws ; the nerves, muscles, and the mental habits and urges are bound together in a reciprocity which has to be studied and properly exploited.

But beyond these two spheres man possesses what we may describe as the sphere of his spirit. The *totality* of a man's personality—that is to say, the unique combination of body, mind and the basic direction of each man's being—is his spiritual personality. How to help this total personality of man to derive his utmost from leisure for creative self-expression, is the problem which industrialists, employers, educators and psychologists have to find out.

Evidently there can be no general solution of the right use of leisure by mass-organisation. And yet it would be wrong to leave the problem to uneducated enterprise and the mere chance desires or attempts of individuals. It is no doubt true that the individual must ultimately decide ; from his own understanding of his purpose in life, his sense of his own limitations and possibilities he must find out how best to use the rhythm of leisure for his refreshment and self-expression.

* Delivered at the World Congress for Leisure Time and Recreation, Hamburg, July 23rd—30th, 1936.

His sense of art, his religious conception, his duty to his country and to humanity must determine how he would like to employ his spare time after his work of the day has been done. If he is one of those fortunate individuals whose vocation and professional activities are in harmony with his real interests in life, then his leisure time would naturally tend to help him in the realisation of his ideals. But it is not necessary that a man's work in the professional world be closely connected with his more fundamental needs for which he must consciously and unconsciously employ his leisure-time. Here comes the further need of experienced men who will know how to guide individual youth in making his leisure not only a physical rest and a mental recreation, but also a natural ally of the total and basic drive of his life.

In India great emphasis was laid on this larger aspect of leisure ; the value of Nature's influence was fully realised in this connection. For nature offers us a completeness from which we can draw lessons for life on the human plane. In the forest colonies, the setting of woods, clear air and beneficent surroundings were helpful factors ; the Indian educators also understood the need of mental and physical control with which to make pauses between work fully restorative and fruitful. Indian thinkers knew that a man's work and his rest must be in harmony with his climate and the local needs of environment. They also realised the need of harmony with the *spiritual climate* in which a man lives ; the climate which is created by the historical, religious, and cultural traditions. India laid emphasis on the good life, the useful life ; in the *Upanishads* it is enjoined that we should "desire to live a hundred years, for fulfilling (our) work" ; and detailed instructions are given about the right method of making the mind and the body serve the complete life. Joy in work was related to Joy in Life ; for, as the *Upanishads* stated—"Out of Joy have all beings been born." The youth in ancient India, in the period of training known as *Brahmacharyya* had to learn the technique of living from the experienced teachers in the *ashramas* (the forest hermitages) ;—This included not only the work of the study hours, but the free time of recreation and the period given to the service of the community. Leisure and work were not separated from each other, but were seen as parts of the inclusive spiritual existence which guided them both.

Throughout India's history this conception of life as a rhythm, which operated in the struggle of one's daily activities as well as in

one's creative leisure, played an important part in the education of the youth. But conditions have changed ; in the East as well as in the West we are now making new adjustments ; our ideals have to be re-established in the light of modern understanding. Each country and civilisation in our Age must evolve a technique of living which is in harmony with the world-ideal, and is yet intimately related to the genius of its own particular tradition and the texture of its social existence. Physically, we are less dependent than before, on any particular environment—we can *change* our environment to a greater degree—and we can with fuller knowledge of nature's laws, conduct our mental lives with greater freedom and resistance. The youth to-day, in the East as in the West, feels that he is not able to make the best use of his life because the old instinctive adaptations and the normal traditional habits have become less important and yet they have not been replaced by a satisfying *conscious* ideology and technique more in harmony with our Age. The rapid growth of knowledge, and the accelerated life of our times, have split up man's life into specialised areas ; the conception of pleasure and work as a *whole*, which has to be brought in relation to some central ideal of life, has become increasingly difficult for the youth of to-day to realise.

Here the youth of the East is practically in the same position of perplexity and frustration as the youth in the West ; he wants to be helped in guiding his life as a complete unity and not as a collection of miscellaneous parts ; his work and his leisure have to be adjusted in such a way as to give him joy in self-expression. The youth in India has perhaps a more fundamental philosophy at his disposal, but he is deprived of the technical resources with which to give practical shape to his ideals. In the Western countries we find the youth to-day striving to revive and strengthen creative traditions ; there is an attempt everywhere to hold up before one's vision some national and universal ideal which should integrate his existence. The fragmentariness of high-speed modern life which divides man's work and leisure into disharmonious units has brought about an increasing dissatisfaction ; through technique, and through belief in some larger background of life youth to-day is trying to see himself and his work and his need for creative leisure in the right perspective.

How to co-ordinate the modern technique with the ideal of self-expression, both in work and in leisure ? That is the problem that youth in the modern world is facing together in different countries. And here, as I began saying, we come to the question of the ideal of a

complete life ; no problem of leisure or work can be solved till we have approached it from this standpoint. Tagore, our great Indian poet and educator, has in his University-Colony at Santiniketan, made wonderful experiments in co-ordinating leisure and work in an atmosphere of complete life,—the Eastern ideal and the Western technique have met in the community life of his Institution. I submit that at this conference, the conception that work and leisure for the youth to-day must form a part of a harmonious totality, should be given due consideration. This ideal has always been there, but the time has come when the conception of individual self-expression should be evaluated and re-established under the full scrutiny of modern technical knowledge and educational psychology.

In Germany, technique and metaphysics have gone together ; your great civilisation is based on a mastery of what one may call the machinery of existence, and on the recognition at the same time of the spiritual reality of man. This Conference itself is a symbol of that spirit of civilisation which seeks to serve the common man ; we are engaged here, if I understand rightly, to find out the means of bringing to the aid of the humblest worker the most advanced resources of civilisation. Modern India, I can assure you, would offer her fullest co-operation in working with you to find out means and measures for making the life of the youth fuller and richer ; to explore the possibilities of advanced thought and technique which may lead our countries to live in harmony with our Age.

ART AND KATHARSIS

Nalini Kanta Gupta

ART, we all know, is concerned with the Beautiful ; it is no less intimately connected with the True ; the Good too is in like manner part and parcel of the aesthetic movement. For, Art not only delights or illumines, it uplifts also to the same degree. Only it must be noted that the upliftment aimed at or effected is not a mere moral or ethical edification—even as the Truth which Art experiences or expresses is not primarily the truth of external facts and figures in the scientific manner, nor the Beauty it envisages or creates the merely pleasant and the pretty.

There is a didactic Art that looks openly and crudely to moral hygiene. And because of this, there arose, as a protest and in opposition, a free-lance art that sought to pursue art for art's sake and truth for truth's sake—even if that truth and that art were unpleasant and repellent to the morality-ridden sophisticated consciousness. Or perhaps it may have been the other way round : because of the degeneracy of Art from its high and serious and epic nobility and sublimity to lesser levels of aesthetic hedonism and diletantism that the didactic took its rise and sought to yoke art to duty, to moral welfare and social service. Not that there is an inherent impossibility of moralising art becoming good art in its own way ; but great art is essentially a-moral—not in the sense of being *infra-moral*, but in the sense of being *supra-moral*.

Art does not tend towards the Good in the manner of the moralist. It does not teach or preach that virtue is to be pursued and vice to be shunned, that a good deed is rewarded and a wrong one punished. Poetic justice, of the direct and crude style, is a moral code or dogma, and, if imposed upon the aesthetic movement, serves only to fetter and curb and twist it. Art opens the vision to a higher good than what the conventions of moral idealism can frame. Great art does not follow the lines laid down by the ethical mentality, not only because this mentality cannot embody the true truth, but also because it does not give us the Good which art should aim at, that is to say, the purest and the highest good.

Aristotle speaks of the purifying function of the tragic art.

How is the purification effected? By the evocation of the feelings of pity and terror. For such feelings widen the sympathies, pull us out of our small egoistic personal ephemeral pleasures and put us in contact with what is to be shared and enjoyed in wide commonality. Tragedy, in this way, initiates the spectator into the enjoyment that is born not of desire and gain but of detachment and freedom.

The uplifting power of Art is inherent in its nature, for Art itself is the outcome of an uplifted nature. Art is the expression of a heightened consciousness. The ordinary consciousness in which man lives and moves is narrow, limited, obscure, faltering, unhappy—it is the abode of all that is evil and ugly; it is inartistic. The poetic zeal, enthusiasm or frenzy, when it seizes the consciousness, at once lifts it high into a state that is characterised by wideness and depth and a new and fresh exhilarating intensity of perception and experience. We seem to arrive at the very fountain-head, where things take birth and are full of an unspoiled life and power and beauty and light and harmony. A line burdened with the whole tragedy of earthly existence such as Shakespeare's—

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain. . . .

or the Virgilian syllables ringing, as it were, with the crash of destiny and the doom of the world—

feror ingenti circumdata nocte,

Invalidasque tibi tendens, heu! non, tua palmas. . . .

even if they make us sad do not depress the soul; it is a divine sadness fraught with a profound calm and a strange poignant sweetness of secret delight. The rhythm and the sound and the suggestions so insinuate themselves into our nerve and blood that these seem to be sublimated—as if by a process of oxygenation—to a finer substance, a purer and more limpid and vibrant valency. A consciousness opens in our very flesh and marrow that enables us to pierce the veil of things and pass beyond and understand—see and experience—the why and the how and the whither of it all. It is a consciousness cosmic in its purview and disposition, which even like the Creator could contemplate all and declare it all as *good*. Indeed, this is the Good which Art at its highest seeks to envisage and embody—the summum bonum that accompanies a summit consciousness. It is idle to say that all or most poets have this revelatory vision of the Seer—Rishi—but a poet is a poet in so far as he is capable of this vision; otherwise he remains more or less either a moralist or a mere aesthete.

Whatever is ugly and gross, all the ills and evils of life—that is to say, what appears as such to our external mind and senses—when they have passed through the crucible of the poet's consciousness undergoes a sea-change and puts on an otherworldly beauty and value. We know of the alchemy of poetic transformation that was so characteristic of Wordsworth's manner and to which the poet was never tired of referring, how the physical and brute nature—even a most insignificant and meaningless and unshapely object in it attains a spiritual sense and beauty when the poet takes it up and treasures it in his tranquil and luminous and in-gathered consciousness, his "inward eye". A crude feeling, a raw passion, a tumult of the senses, in the same way, sifted through the poetic perception becomes something that opens magic casements, glimpses the silence of the farthest Hebrides, wafts us into the bliss of the invisible and the beyond.

The voice of Art is sweetly persuasive—*kāntāsammita*, as the Sanskrit rhetoricians say—it is the voice of the beloved, not that of the school master. The education of Poetry is like education of Nature : the poet said of the child that "grew in sun and shower"—

And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

Even so the beauty of poetic creation, when we contemplate it and live in it, automatically and inevitably steals into our consciousness, works a subtle change in our nature and by elevating and refining it makes us, for the moment at least, less crude and obscure and earthy things that we usually are.

MEDITATION

My meditation is a flower in flight
Whose every petal is a halcyon wing.
It speaks without a sound from height to height
Establishing the soul's authentic Spring.

My meditation is a flight in flower
Leaving a trail of perfume in the air
Above the voiceless One's inviolate tower
Reached by long sorrow's crystal winding-stair.

My meditation is an eye of fire
Awaked out of some old forgotten deep,
Circled with flames it dances like a pyre
On which the body has been laid asleep.

My meditation is a fire of eyes
Turned inwards on a myriad worlds that burn
In the Unborn wherein all splendours rise
To greet His immemorial return.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya.

INDIAN THOUGHT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT *

A Review of Dr. Albert Schweitzer's book by Prof. P. B. Adhikari

INDIAN Thought is no longer a sealed book to the West. Its study from the original sources appears to have been seriously undertaken in the day both on the continents of Europe and America. Correct translations, appreciative reviews and sympathetic criticisms are appearing, from time to time, in the different languages of the western countries. The present work is an off-shoot of the same tendencies. It represents the German character of extensive studies of a subject undertaken for critical research, and it is well-known that Germany has contributed more to the presentation of the results of oriental studies than any other country in the West. The nature of the work under review bears also unavoidably, it might be supposed, the special mark of the main German philosophical tendency. It is synthetic in character. The author has taken up his stand on a certain principle which appeared to him to represent and pervade the development of a thought foreign to him and has attempted to interpret the different phases of its course according to the principle adopted almost *a priori*. Yet it is a well-known fact that it is not so easy to enter deeply and completely into the spirit of a foreign thought and to interpret it adequately, however sympathetic the attitude might be. The difficulty again is bound to be greater when an attempt is made, as it seems to have been done in the present work, to read into a thought, characteristically different from one's own, a principle of interpretation of his own making, however innocent the insight and honest the attempt may be. The present author is no doubt very earnest in presentation, and sympathetic, in his own way, towards the thought he presents. Still it is but the attitude of an outside onlooker of a current of thought with which he has not that inner touch which one floating with the current is expected to have. I do not mean to say by this that the author has not done his best to enter into it, but still the result is inevitably what it could be in the situation. At the same time all praise is due to the honest endeavour, whatever the actual result may be.

The name given to the work is rather an ambitious one, the volume promising, by its title, to present 'Indian Thought and Its

* *Indian Thought and its Development*—By Dr. Albert Schweitzer,—Hodder and Stoughton—Price 5/- net.

Development'. The subject is, in its very nature, an expansive and intricate one, on which volumes might be written without doing full justice to it. Besides, to trace out the course of a thought one must have a broad and accurate acquaintance with the circumstances under which the thought arose and developed historically. The origin of Indian Thought lies deep in the forgotten past. This is not peculiar to the Indian itself. It is the case, more or less, with all courses of thought which claim a hoary ancestry. The history of ancient India is still in the making. Whether it would ever go beyond its present stage is a question of the future. So imperfect and inadequate are the materials available till now that it is almost impossible to form a correct idea of the actual circumstances, spiritual, intellectual, social and political, under which the thought arose and developed. All that has been done yet in the field on the basis of the available literature of the ancient period is inadequate for the purpose. So we are bound to stay at theorisation and guess-work in the situation. The present author has also unavoidably done that in his work. Only in his presentation he appears to have followed mainly the deductive instead of the strictly inductive and scientific method. And there are dangers to the application of the former method in matters relating to a period which is far beyond our view.

There might be pointed out one exception to the observations made above. In the field of thought relating to ancient India, it might be said, we have at least an available literature complete and systematic in itself, from which we could learn a good deal about the philosophy and religion of the past of the country. This is partially true, and there would have arisen no question, if the presentation of this phase of Indian life and mind in its somewhat developed form, as it is found in the systematic works on the subject, was in point here. But the origin of the thought of the land, as of every other land, which claims an equal ancestry, must remain in the dark. The present author has not, it appears, made seriously any such attempt. That was not his main purpose. Nor does the author attempt to present fully the different systems of Indian philosophy. A reader would be disappointed if he expected to find that in the book. The author's intention, as indicated by implication, in the very beginning of the work, was quite different. He reads into the thought a meaning—an attitude of mind—which he thinks to be the real spirit of the thought as underlying the different phases in the course of its development. His aim appears mainly to be, not a theoretical

presentation of it, but a practical one in so far as the thought has influenced the world and life view of the people concerned. It is, as stated by him repeatedly in a quaint phrase, throughout the work, the idea of "world and life negation", as contrasted with the tenor of thought in the west (as also that of China and Persia) characterised as "world and life affirmation". This way of characterising the tendencies of thought of particular peoples, if it can at all be strictly called to be of *thought* alone, is rather too sweeping in its own way. And the author has virtually admitted this in the very first chapter of the book in comparing and contrasting the tenor of European and Indian thought. In subsequent chapters, too, in dealing with Indian Thought, he has modified his treatment in a way, which rather thins the position a good deal, if not actually contradicts it. The tendencies of thought, or of attitude towards world and life, can hardly be characterised properly by a sweeping phrase, or brought under a single category. It is so complex everywhere. There are so many different trends mixed up closely or loosely, that it is difficult to select any one out of them as the essential. All that can be done is to emphasise elements as they have been prominent or predominant in the course of the intellectual history of a people or of the practical life based upon them. One can at most speak of the fundamental note underlying them. Even in attempting this, the selection is a very difficult task. We can only speak of a general spirit running through the course. I am inclined to think that our present author has meant to emphasise this general spirit of Indian Thought as compared with that of European and other countries, which, according to him, stand pre-eminently for "world and life affirmation".

Now supposing that the characterisation and comparison is somewhat appropriate, does it truly and adequately represent the spirit of Indian *Thought* by calling it mainly one of "world and life negation" ? The phrase represents rather a practical attitude of mind towards life and its activities in relation to the world in which the life is or has to be lived. But is it the fundamental one there ? Is it not rather the result of a certain way of preference among the *values* of life ? There are values material and spiritual. The attitude, the author speaks of here, arises virtually out of the preference of either. Man, by his complex nature, seeks both as far as the circumstances of life permit it. The recorded pursuits of primitive men even testify to this. The question is which of the values is made fundamental and permanent on the whole. Here different peoples have differed in the

course of their cultural history. Some have emphasised the material values and subordinated the spiritual to them, while others have done the reverse. With others, again, there has been a vacillation between the two, particularly in periods of transition—which may rather be called periods of struggle. The victory has, however, been on the whole on the side of the spiritual, as the religious history of struggling nations indicates. But at the same time, this victory has been a temporary one with some people, with others comparatively permanent. It is no doubt a great achievement for those who have succeeded in making the victory a stationary one. They have seen, with a true insight, on which side the preference has to be given, so that it may be a lasting one. We may presume such a struggle had gone on in the ancient days of India, ultimately bringing about a preference of the spiritual values as the supreme. This preference, the result of a true insight and effort had, however, to be made a lasting feature of their life, for which mere insight would not have sufficed. It needed a support, both intellectual and practical, for the purpose. The intellectual support, came from philosophical thought, its different schools being but different ways of approaching the same problem—all standing for the same preference. The so-called orthodox and unorthodox systems were both influenced by the same spirit. On the side of practical support, the social and political institutions which came to be introduced from time to time in the cultural history of India tell also the same story. Their very organisation was meant to uphold the same spirit and to lend it a practical support from the outside to make the preference permanent, as far as possible, and in the light of the circumstances prevailing at different times. It would not exactly be true to say, therefore, that the root of all was the “world and life negation”.

The author has no doubt attempted to trace out the attitude to a philosophic view about the essential nature of the self and its relation to the universe of reality—a view which he considers to be the fundamental tendency in the upanisadic speculations. It is what is called *Monism* (*Advaitavada*)—the doctrine of identity (lit. non-duality) of the individual and the world spirit. The ultimate reality underlying the universe is a changeless Being, which forms the soul of all things (including the human selves), the changing objects and events, both of the outer world and the inner, being regarded as mere *appearances* without a *substantiality*. This he considers to be the fundamental note of the teachings of the Vedas, towards which the earlier thoughts contained in the *Rig Veda* tended ultimately and

found its culmination in the Upanisads, which came therefore to be called *Vedanta*—the end or ultimate object of the Veda. This is the Western interpretation of the term *Vedanta*, adopted also by Deussen. Whether this interpretation is the right one or not is not in point here. What is of importance to observe is that, though not the term, the system of thought called by it was of later origin than the earlier Upanisads themselves. It is curious to note in this connection that Haribhadra Suri (whose date has not yet been settled finally) does not make any mention of the system in his *Saddarsana-samuccaya*, in which he presents in outline all the principal philosophical standpoints prevalent in India in his time. Had *Vedanta* as a system of thought been current in his day he would not have omitted its mention in his work, while he treats of *Mimamsa*. Besides, it is questionable whether the Vedantic doctrine of non-duality, as the author of the book under review understands it, is the fundamental teaching of the Upanisads, and even supposing it is, whether this doctrine represents truly and adequately the attitude of the Indian mind, both speculative and practical, towards world and life. If one reads the Upanisads closely and critically, he is bound to note that they contain different strata of thought, philosophical and religious, even the earliest ones being no exception on this point. They embody the different philosophic positions of different thinkers belonging to particular *sakhas* (literally branches) or Vedic schools, the names of which some of the earlier Upanisads bear still. This is perhaps the reason which makes the Upanisads so unsystematic in their own way, and incongruent in the doctrines inculcated therein. From this it might be reasonably surmised that all the different lines of thought and speculative conclusions were in the air, as it were, at the time of the particular Upanisads, when they came to be formed or expanded. The supposition may also be hazarded that the different strata of thought were not embodied all at once. This was a work of collection done in the course of time. However, the point to be emphasised here is that no one position—*monistic*, *monotheistic*, *pantheistic*, and even *atheistic*—can be regarded as the fundamental note of Indian Thought, and therefore determinant of the attitude of Indian mind towards world and life. They were all current more or less, the emphasis on one or other of them being made from time to time, due to circumstances which it is difficult to make out, even to guess, at present. Curiously enough the author has virtually admitted this in the course of his treatment of certain phases of Indian Thought and

practice in the later chapters of his book. Nay, he goes even to declare that in these phases the old attitude of negation came to be less and less prominent and that of affirmation came to be uppermost, as for instance in Jainism and Buddhism. But he at the same time observes that this change in attitude was not the orthodox one and rather deplores that it came to be supplanted, if not annihilated, later on. It is not my business here to discuss how far the author's interpretation of the two heterodox systems, as of others of the kind, is the true and proper one. It is a big question, whose treatment would unnecessarily make this review too lengthy. But one thing I cannot help mentioning here that these so-called heterodox systems would have secured no willing adherents, and a comparatively permanent footing in the Indian mind, if they had really been so foreign to the traditions of the people. We can only quote in support of this statement the well-known fate of foreign cultures in the soil of India. Even where they are found to have tardily got a lodgement in the Indian mind, that is where they came in contact with congenial elements in the native culture and its traditions.

In his treatment of the later tendencies of thought and practice in India, as represented by what he regards questionably as *non-Vedic*, the author deplores, at several places, that the Indian position has never been truly and fully *ethical* as the Western has become or tends to become. It is curious how he comes to this conclusion. The question depends on what is meant here by *ethical*. The author has no doubt tried, in his own vague way, to explain what he means by the term and appears to entertain the idea that its essence lies in disinterested service to humanity as a whole, both present and future, and not to any special part of it to the neglect or detriment of the other parts. Good, so far as it goes. But how does he assert that he misses this ethical spirit in Indian thought and practices, as if the ethical were the highest end of life? He recognises no doubt the value of the teachings of *Bhagavatgita*, and also of Jainism and Buddhism, on the subject, but he observes at the same time that these teachings can hardly be called *purely* ethical in his sense of the term, because he thinks that this attitude of disinterested service is not there inculcated as a good in itself, lacking as its basis in heart as pure compassion or sympathy for humanity at large. And he adds further that the attitude of service is even made there, in his view, a secondary thing being subordinated to the main and ultimate purpose of life, as conceived by the systems concerned,

namely, a beatific condition in this or after life—the attainment of a *moksha* or *nirvana* or an everlasting happy place in the sphere of Brahma or God (Brahmaloka). The life of Karma is only a preparation for this goal as conceived in a philosophical way or as based on the particular philosophic view about the nature of the universe and man's place in it. Yes, to a certain extent this may be true. But is not this way of looking at the matter one of appreciation of values, as I have pointed out before? The question is what is really of *intrinsic* worth in life—what are its highest values. Where are we to draw the line? Is a life of strenuous activities in the service of humanity to be made the ultimate goal of life, or is there anything beyond it of which this is but a means, i. e. a preparation of the inner self for the attainment of values beyond? The East and the West may differ here, practically, though not theoretically. For man is man after all, and the question is bound to arise—why is this service to be demanded of man? Can it be the ultimate end there? Do we not look to a beyond—to a joy or peace—a personal condition of the self, call it by whatever name you may? A mere life of activity—for the sake of activity, however it may pose itself as one of service—is likely, more often than not, to go astray, as the history of super-abundance of activities in modern Europe and America testifies. The mind of the East, as of India, looks on life of action in a different way, and justly so, for it sees beyond a higher end for which life stands. It is left to the judgment of outside impartial critics to evaluate properly the difference, as it deserves to be. Curiously enough, the author himself in a way comes up to a similar position, in the concluding chapter of the book, in what he calls “ethical mysticisms” as the highest goal of life, which is quite different from action dictated by mere compassion for humanity.

As for the observation made by the author that even Jainism and Buddhism, though emphasising, implicitly or explicitly, the idea of “world and life affirmation” in their teachings, do not still attain the high ethical position—which he upholds as the goal of the West. This may be true, because they are products of the many-sided Indian culture. But the complaint is that, even in their positions, disinterested service to living beings (and not to humanity alone) out of mere compassion or sympathy for them is found to be wanting, because the acts of charity inculcated by the faiths are regarded as serving a spiritual purpose beyond the acts or as a necessary discipline of the mind to the same end. It is a wonder indeed how he makes this

sweeping statement. For it would be hardly correct to say that there was no compassion underlying their charitable deeds, seeing that the acts extended, not simply to the wide world of humanity, but also to that of animals. The doctrine of *ahimsa* (non-cruelty) was not a mere passive attitude of mind with them, but found expression in positive acts and institutions of service. The hospitals for diseased and decrepit animals, founded by Asoka, bear testimony to that. The institution is not dead yet, but continues still in this country with Hindus and Jainas both. It is not known for certain, from the religious history of man, that any other faith inculcated this, or found an outlet in this kind of active service to the dumb creatures. Besides, even supposing that these acts or institutions, with them, were not due to any tenderness of heart—a compassion or sympathy with suffering man and animal,—this is but an inadequate basis for that wide service, which knows no limits or restrictions of geographical, racial, national or social proximity. An act of charity, if it were entirely left to the changeable human heart, is bound to be partial, for human feelings are whimsical in their own way—they have their natural idiosyncracies and limitations. Pure disinterested service, whatever the object may be, would frustrate its end, if indulged in only when appropriate emotions dictate it. The sad state of events in the West testifies unmistakably to this. What would the author say, for instance, of the wars of stronger nations on the weaker ones and the inhuman cruelties perpetrated in the “high” name or pretence of conquest for civilisation? Where does the *compassion* lie here! Christianity teaches—“Love thy neighbour as thyself”. But the question is : who is and who is not thy neighbour—where to draw the line? This noble principle of conduct is unfortunately cast to the winds, even by those who profess the faith, at times of war, civil or political. How uncertain would our conduct towards others be if left entirely to the vagaries of the heart!

The author has dealt, rather elaborately, with the doctrine of re-incarnation and discussed at length its legitimate place in Indian thought and culture. The opinion thrown out is that the doctrine does not belong to the real vedic culture of India, but that it came to be grafted on it from a foreign source—from the non-aryans among whom the Aryan conquerors came to settle. This is the present-day view of the Indologists and historians of Indian Thought. The position has not, however, been finally settled yet. It might as well be an outgrowth of the tendencies of the Indian mind in the natural course

of its intellectual development,—and as such it came to be accepted as a hypothesis to account for certain facts of life which would otherwise remain inexplicable. However, as the doctrine is not made much of in the critical spirit of the day, nor has it been made seriously a topic for discussion or elaboration by modern thinkers and reformers in India, it may be left out without any further discussion. It is to the work of these thinkers and reformers that I proceed now.

The author has in the end brought in consideration of the contributions made to the development of Indian Thought by modern thinkers and reformers—from Raja Ram Mohun Roy to Saint Arobindo Ghose. This is a welcome addition to the subject, which would certainly have remained incomplete without the consideration. For they have, each in his own way, carried on what they have realised to be the essential, and the most valuable, character of Indian culture, that has come down, through various vicissitudes, from the hoary past to the present day. Their differences are not, however, so fundamental as they seem to be—the same spirit running through them all. But to say, as the author appears to do, expressly or by implication, that these thinkers are more or less influenced by western thought and culture does not appear to be quite true. If closely considered, one can discern unmistakably, in their respective contributions, a vision of the old spirit presented in different garbs. The awakening with them might partly have been due to Western influences, but it is still an *awakening* and not something foreign borrowed from the West. No culture remains at its high level for all times to come. There are ebbs and flows—periods of ascendancy and decadence—in the course of human history. This may be partly due to the inherent inertia of human nature, partly to the change of circumstances, intellectual, social, political, and physical to a certain extent. No country or nation has ever been free from such changes, and the consequent decadence of the old ways of thought and life, until new suitable ones come to take their place. And the same has been with India, demanding an awakening to the old spirit and a comparatively new mode of interpretation of the old in the light of the changed circumstances. And this is what, to my mind, the modern thinkers and reformers have done. And truly has the immortal *Bhagavatgita* given expression to this tendency in human history in the memorable lines :

“Whenever there is decadence of *Dharma* and ascendancy of *Adharma*, I appear then to protect the virtuous and to destroy the vicious ; I am born, from time to time, to establish *Dharma*.”

The 'I' here represents the divine spirit, running through the whole course of human history, not recognised properly in the work of true reformers.

R E V I E W S

Twenty-six Songs by Rabindranath Tagore—Noted down by
Mr. Arnold A. Bake—Published by the Bibliothèque
Musicale du Musée Guimet—(36 francs).

A CERTAIN poet once pathetically prayed for the “giftie” to “see oursel’s as others see us.” But here is a book which I can confidently recommend to the Indian musical public, if they wish to hear themselves as others hear us.

This is a book of songs entitled “Chansons de Rabindranath Tagore” recently published from Paris by the Musée Guimet, and kindly sent to me by the compiler, Dr. Arnold A. Bake. Perhaps some of my Bengali readers may remember this tall handsome young Dutchman, with the fine tenor voice, who used to sing the songs of many nations, and was always accompanied (in both senses) by his amiable and gifted wife. Both had been re-named Aruni and Karuna by my uncle Rabindranath, under whose *aegis* they lived and studied for some years in Santiniketan. I believe Dr. Bake had been sent out to India by his Government to write a thesis on Indian music, and his main object was to study Sanskrit treatises on the subject, with the help of the Visva-Bharati professors. Incidentally he interested himself in folk-songs, of which I remember being regaled with various charming specimens on his gramophone one evening. He also fully availed himself of this golden opportunity of hearing and learning Rabindranath’s songs from their greatest custodian and most authoritative exponent, the late Dinendranath Tagore ; and noting them down with his untiring and sympathetic help.

One thing I like most about the book is the care and conscientiousness of which it bears evident marks ; qualities which are more often than not, conspicuous by their absence unfortunately in our part of the world. It goes without saying that the printer’s devil has played a few tricks,—where in the world can he be avoided altogether ?—but they belong mostly to the domain of the words, and not to that of the music, in which, the least little slip is as unpardonable an offence as mistakes in the utterance of *mantrams*. The next edition, if ever there is one, may profitably contain a list of errors.

Twenty-six songs in all have been selected from Rabindranath’s inexhaustible repertoire ; of which the first twenty-one bear the hall-

mark of Dinendranath's tuition, and the last five have been chosen by the compiler for his own reasons, given in the preface.

Besides the actual songs, there are two short prefaces and a fairly long introduction by A. Bake and Philip Stern,—the latter being the Director of the Musical Library of the Musée Guimet. Rules for transliteration are then given, followed by short explanatory notes on each song. All these are given in both the French and English languages ; thus putting the volume within the reach of all Europe and America.

Again, at the end of the book three different kinds of translations are given of the songs—one in French by Mr. H. P. Morris, a Parsi gentleman whose long and intimate connection with Santiniketan ended only with his death, and who, I understand, was one of the few Indians who really knew French ;—secondly, a literal English translation by Dr. Bake following the original Bengali text, line for line ; and last but not least, the Poet's own free English rendering.

The mere mention of the above facts is enough to prove what I have just said about the scrupulous thoroughness with which the work has been carried out. To those who know music, other instances will naturally suggest themselves, on going through the book ; such as the trouble taken to express the correct tempo and *nuances* of the tune, and to mark the exact places of the beat of hands. The phrase "snapping the fingers" constantly used by Dr. Bake in connection with the Indian method of marking time, rather puzzled me at first, I must confess ; until it struck me that it referred to the peculiar sound which some people make with the fingers to keep time whilst singing—a thing I have never tried to do myself ; though a friend of ours was such an adept at the art, that he had the whole complicated time-system of the *tabla* almost at his fingers' ends, so to speak. Clapping of hands is more to my taste than snapping of fingers.

As I began by saying, Bengali admirers of Rabindranath's music will be chiefly interested in the choice of songs made by Dr. Bake, and his informed comments, comparative or otherwise, on these songs and the best method of singing them ; thus enabling them to see familiar things in a new light and through foreigners. I doubt whether the book will prove to be a best-seller even amongst the musical public ; because on the one hand it will appeal only to those who are genuinely interested in Indian music (thus eliminating most Europeans), and on the other it can only cater to those who know English notation (thus eliminating most Indians). I trust, however, that in these days of

internationalism, the former circle will gradually grow wider and wider, and that this book is only the first instalment of a series of such experiments in interpreting the East to the West, through that subtle and universal medium which is music.

Indira Devi Chaudhurani.

Strange Journey :

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya.

Published by Bharati Shakty Nilayam, Pondicherry.

Price Rupees Three only.

FROM a singer to the gallery to a minstrel of the Silence and Synthesis, which is at the heart of the universe,—such is often the arc of a true poet's evolution. But between the two points of the arc there lies a vast stretch of strange experiences. And there is no doubt that Harindranath Chattopadhyaya during the last few years, has passed through some of these, and thus contacted the circuit of the spirit.

"I have ceased to be the poet
And have learned to be the song."

And as he sings that song his

"Time goes by like music
Rich with inaudible bars."

And nature helps him to understand the song :

"Emerald sun of blinding naught !
In a glow-worm you are caught.

Ocean ! You have found a prop
In an eyelike water-drop.
Rainbow ! You are being explained,
By a pearl, interior-stained. . . .
O divine infinity
Who have come to school in me !"

Why does Harindranath love this song,—this symphony of the spirit ?

"O Song I love you, not because you free
Some portion of my being's melody,
But for the ever-deepening fact
That you are packed
With quality of your own after-hush."

And it is in this "after-hush" that occasionally he feels the ecstasy of at-one-ment :

"I am at one with thee beyond the reach
Of mine own self, yea, exquisitely one.
Being a part of thee, all thought and speech
Are in the silent depths of thee begun
Fused with thine own in lambent union. . . .

Deep-rooted in thy breakless ecstasy
Beloved, I have grown from thine to thee."

It is only when he tries to analyse or explain this "breakless ecstasy" that the poet's Pegasus, which otherwise now trots and now gallops, begins to amble ; to wit :

"Until your consciousness has learned to be
A blue and passionless infinity
Of Truth's essential firmament,
Let it content
Yourself to be a mountain, gazing at
The flood of light above."

There are two 'stages' in Harindranath's *Strange Journey* ; namely the purely poetic and the purely psychic. And wherever the dividing line between the two thins down, the result is a journey through a land, which is illuminated with the beauty of truth and truth of beauty.

G. M.

Lancer At Large :

By Lt. Col. Yeats Brown. Gallancz. 10/6.

BEING one of the 73,000 buyers of the Bengal Lancer, it is but natural that I should have been eagerly awaiting the arrival in the country of Col. Yeats-Brown's new book on India. My interest had only increased through close association and discussions of a very busy day at Santiniketan when he came to pay a brief visit to the Poet Rabindranath Tagore, a description of which will be found in the book.

It is said that it is comparatively easier to make money than to keep it. I do not know if similarly it is easy to make a literary reputation, but I certainly believe, in any case it will be more difficult to retain the reputation which has once been made. Most

successful journalistic autobiographers are 'one-book' men, and Col. Yeats-Brown seemed to have supplied additional evidence to this sweeping statement with his two later books. But India with her innumerable monks, monasteries and monkeys is his life's chief interest and therefore he has performed almost a miracle of writing a second book on India and incidentally on himself which may prove even more interesting and enduring than the Bengal Lancer. It will certainly add to his bank balance. The writer has fulfilled his ambition of writing a very readable book, though he is fully conscious that such a book would of necessity be somewhat superficial (page 18).

It is this superficiality of approach that has disappointed me, for I had imagined that one endowed with so much knowledge of Indian history, religion and society and endowed with such transparent sympathy and love would have understood the Indian situation more deeply and seen more clearly the root causes of Indian discontent. Perhaps his heart was not really in this and it is only his contract with his Editor that sent him whirling through this vast continent in search of political and economical information and survey. His soul all the time yearned for the Guru he was in need of and therefore it is little wonder that at the Kumbh Mela at Allahabad, Pandit Malaviya meant much less for him than the procession of the naked Bairagis to the river. True to his contract he did indeed see the great old Pandit sitting bareheaded, in a dhoti and shawl in a dark and almost empty tent. This gentle-mannered old man produced in him a profound sense of depression and with a query in his heart as to what had made his race so bitter to the old Pandit and the people he represents, Col. Yeats-Brown went out of the tent into the big bright world. But he does not realise that for us there is hardly that big bright world. If even the Bengal Lancer does not see it, who amongst his race can? He gives us consolation through Mr. Siri Ram that the Indian (!) administration is the cheapest in the world calculated by head of population and "has given you peace and security". That a nation with an annual per capita income of less than Rs. 25 has little need of security, who would satisfactorily explain to the Colonel Shahib?

The India that we represent,—it may seem strange to many, but we do indeed represent a section at least of this great country—has little place for and interest in Bairagis, theories and examples of re-incarnation and strange feats of Hatha-Yogis and so on. The Upanishads offer little consolation when the belly is crying for food and the indestructibility of soul means very little when an irate,

unmannerly Chhotashahib reminds you at inconvenient moments that you are a mere Babu !

Though he has nowhere used the infamous statement generally attributed to His Highness of Bikaner, his mind seems to be full of the thought, so common to most of our sincere English friends, that the day the British army would withdraw from India not a virgin or a rupee will be left in the northern plains. It is a most interesting subject matter of discussion but what Indian would venture on such a discussion with the existing Press Acts and the sweeping laws of Sedition ? Silence is so often golden in these days !

But all this is not to deny Col. Yeats-Brown his full share of credit. The book is excellent reading and I doubt if there are many Englishmen who could write such a book today on India. His keen sense of humour and the fine descriptive language he is master of keep one spell bound and many will finish the book at one sitting.

A. K. C.

The Model Village :

By A. H. Jaisinghani.

Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras.

A GREAT deal of attention is at present being paid to the problem of rural development in this country. A time has come when even the Government recognizes that the rural problem can no longer be ignored and therefore it has been spending a considerable sum of money for the improvement of economic and social condition of the rural population. There are many private organizations scattered all over India which for some time have been making attempts to solve the village problems in a small way. Such an experiment is being carried on at TAIB by the author of the book under notice. He has definite ideals of village life and with this purpose has set up a new village with a group of people in order to realize his ideals. The book describes the various activities of the model villagers and relates the ways in which the economic, social, religious and political problems are tackled.

The MODEL VILLAGE is a world in miniature. It has all the institutions that one may come across in the wide world. But the social organization is essentially rural. The village has 800 acres of

cultivable land divided equally among 50 families. The houses are arranged according to a definite plan. There are all the amenities of life and the standard of living is such that the villagers enjoy not only a fuller life but a happier one. There is the hospital where the care of the sick is taken. The doctor not only acts as a healer of the sick but teaches the people how to live clean and healthy lives. There is the club, the library, the prayer hall, in fact, all the social amenities have been provided. There is a school run on very modern lines and arrangements have been made for adult education. Lectures and discussions are frequently held. There are co-operative organizations by which money and labor can be saved. The co-operative laundry and the co-operative kitchen, for instance, have been calculated to save 73,800 hours of work to the community annually. The village PANCHAYET, an elected body, looks to the welfare of the community and thus a corporate life has grown up in which a happy compromise of socialism and individualism has been made. Every opportunity is given to the villager to develop in his or her own way. Unsocial activities, however, on the part of an individual member are not tolerated.

The scheme is admirable but on going through the book one feels that the background of the larger world is missing. The importance of the forces that are at work in the outside world is minimized. Any experiment to be of any value must be of such a nature that it can be repeated elsewhere with success. It is possible, as it has been possible in the MODEL VILLAGE, to choose a group of people who would be persuaded to come and live together to form an ideal community. But in order that the experiment may be of some use it should be carried on with the ordinary village folk under ordinary conditions.

The book will prove useful to those who are interested in the welfare of rural India.

S. P. Bose.

Our Cause :

A Symposium by Indian Women—Edited by Shyam
Kumari Nehru. Kitabistan, 17-A City Road,
Allahabad. Rs. 6/-.

THIS is a both interesting and significant book, inasmuch as it gives us an idea of the mental attitudes of that section of Indian women who by virtue of their modern education and social opportunities are able to claim the intellectual leadership of their sex. It is written by "30

eminently qualified Indian women" and deals with "all the divers problems of women in India in every sphere of life. It is at once a history of the struggle for emancipation and a guide for the future."

No Indian can fail to sympathise with the passionate appeal in the book for woman's freedom from social, economic and political bondages and her right to share the full dignity of man. But, except by Sm. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, it seems to have been overlooked by most writers who have contributed that the Indian male himself does not enjoy his full status as a man. He himself is as much the victim of the social, political and economic dead-weight as the woman. It is more amusing than profitable to cry against them whose condition is as pitiful as theirs. The Feminist Movement in India has so far been too upper-middle-class in its constitution and too consciously modelled on its prototype in England for its spirit to be truly and earnestly representative of the Indian woman, except in so far as this mentality too is an aspect of our modern Indian life.

Nevertheless the book is full of much useful information and fine bits of writing. It discusses not only a variety of topics but also discloses a variety of capacities. Some articles are smart, some lyrical, some learned, some thoughtful—though all of them overflow with enthusiasm for OUR CAUSE. And though enthusiasm is always exhilarating, it does not always lead to wise conclusions, as when, for example, the Editor (who has also contributed a learned article on Legal Forms of Marriage in India) in the Introduction suggests that the mother in India was idolised "as if to rationalise centuries of female degradation." It shows a purely intellectual reading of the woman's condition through foreign-formed perspective, and hardly agrees with the intimate feelings of our everyday life. The writer would have been more reasonable in saying that the veneration for mother is one of the few things that have partially redeemed woman's degradation in India. Sm. Rukmini Devi, on the other hand, has waxed a little too lyrical about the spirit of the artist in woman, particularly in Indian woman. "I think it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the soul of a woman is behind most of the magnificent creations of artists from time immemorial. She is the very essence and fragrance of life . . ." This is precisely what men when they are romantic think her to be, and what they wish she were at all other times. In the same section of "Woman as Artist" Sm. Hatheesing has made a general review of Indian Dancing in which she has surveyed the modern schools. It is surprising to note that in the latter survey she has omitted any mention—save

perhaps in a veiled sneer—of the school where she herself learned to appreciate that art and long association with which, as much as anything else, gives her the right and authority to write on Indian Art.

We have no space to review all the articles here. We have to content ourselves with remarking that some of them display considerable merit, both of study and of style. It is therefore unfortunate that the place of honour should have been given to an article—*Position of Hindu woman fifty years ago*—which lacks both. The writer seems to imagine that anglicised homes are the norm in India today, for she talks of conditions fifty years ago as though their very memory should evoke surprise that such things once were. She says of Hindu women of that time that “their houses were furnished with *takht poshes* and *charpais*, with pegs and towel hoses upon which women hung their sarees: they had no dressing tables, they sat on the low wooden seats, with which *Museums now alone acquaint us* (the italics are ours) or on mats and *gaddis* on the floor. . . . Food was eaten in the Indian way, with the fingers off metal platters ; and the women sat on the floor.” That the writer should not know that the majority of Hindu women today live exactly in the same way argues either a special superficiality on the writer’s part or proves our general remark that what the book regards as the representative Indian woman is very remote from the vast masses of them in the land.

Despite a few such unfortunate bits in the book, the general standard maintained is worthy of praise. The Editor is to be congratulated on conducting with distinction the first symposium of its kind in India. The Publishers are to be commended for the very fine get-up of the book, which does full justice to the fair character of the sex the book represents.

K. K.

WHO'S WHO IN THE PRESENT NUMBER

(*In the order of the articles*)

Rabindranath Tagore—Poet. Founder-President, Visva-Bharati.

Barbara Bingley—Mrs. Vere-Hodge. English poetess. Resident in Calcutta.

P. C. Mahalanobis—Professor of Physics in the University of Calcutta, and Director, Statistical Laboratory, Calcutta. Has been a friend and admirer of Rabindranath Tagore and has been associated with some of his activities for a number of years.

K. R. Kripalani—The Editor.

Yone Noguchi—A Japanese poet and writer of international repute.

Ranald Newson—An English poet. Author of *Winter Pastoral and other poems* ; *Suppho* ; *Apollo and Marsyas* ; etc.

C. A. F. Rhys Davids—The celebrated Buddhist scholar.

Yuvanasva—M. Ghatak. A Bengali poet.

Dhurjati Mukherjee—Professor of Sociology in the University of Lucknow. Well-known as a writer in Bengali and as a critic of Indian Classical Music.

Amiya C. Chakravarty—For some years private secretary to Rabindranath Tagore and Lecturer in English, Santiniketan. At present engaged in writing a thesis on Post War English Poetry at Oxford.

Nalini Kanta Gupta—Writer in Bengali. Lives at Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya—An Indian poet. Has Published several volumes of verse in English.

P. B. Adhikari—Professor of Indian Philosophy in the Hindu University, Benares.

Indira Devi Chaudhurani—Niece of Rabindranath Tagore. A Bengali writer of considerable distinction. A keen critic of Indian Music.

G. M.—Gurdayal Mullik—Lecturer in English, Santiniketan.

A. K. C.—Anil Kumar Chanda—Private Secretary to Rabindranath Tagore and Lecturer in Political Science, Santiniketan.

S. P. Bose—Superintendent of Agriculture and Rural Economic Survey at the Institute of Rural Reconstruction, Visva-Bharati, Sriniketan (Santiniketan).

K. K.—The Editor.

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Paintings by Rabindranath Tagore, Abanindranath Tagore and
Atul Bose. Tail-pieces by Nandalal Bose.

Where the man is without fear
And the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up
into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms
towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee
into ever widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,
let my country arise.

Rabindranath Tagore



A Portrait of Rabindranath Tagore

THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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INDIA AND THE WEST ¹

Prof. Dr. M. Winternitz

"East is East and West is West,
And never the twain shall meet."

WITH these words the English poet Rudyard Kipling who possessed pre-eminently a knowledge of India, thought it necessary to characterize the contrast between the Oriental and Occidental world- and life-outlook. Yes, certainly, the East is different from the West. Eastern mentality is different from the Western and probably will always remain different. Nevertheless, East and West have always come in contact with each other in the course of history running through thousands of years. They have never become so different as to make an exchange of material, as well as spiritual goods impossible between them—an exchange which was only possible, because along with all manner of difference and contrast, there was so much of the common human element between Eastern and Western man that the possibility of an agreement and understanding was always present. Even geographical limits have not been able to prevent the destiny of Asia being powerfully influenced by Europe and *vice versa*.

1. This is an English translation, by Dr. S. K. Maitra, Benares Hindu University, of a German article based on a lecture delivered by the author on the 29th November 1933, at the German University of Prague and published in the *Archiv Orientalni*, Vol. 7 (1935) No. 3. The translation has been revised, and a few notes added by the author.

We often speak arbitrarily of "distant" India, if not also of the land "where pepper grows", in order to express how distant and alien this land is to us. In fact, at first sight India appears geographically so sharply separated not only from Europe, but also from the Asiatic Continent, that she appears almost like a separate part of the world, and in many respects, she can indeed be so described. The Himalaya, the "dwelling place of snow", the mightiest mountain of the world, extends like a powerful, insurmountable barrier over the whole northern frontier of India, whereas in the south with the two other sides of its triangular form it projects far into the sea.

But already in ancient times trading vessels used to cross the Arabian Sea, and the Western coast of India, with its numerous harbours, tempted daring sailors and adventurous tradesmen from the West and gave Indian merchants an opportunity to bring their wares to the West. But also in north-west India, towards Afghanistan and Baluchistan, a number of passes break the mountain chain of the Himalaya, and here was the great road of communication through which, in spite of the apparent inaccessibility of the land, conquerors as well as caravans found their way to India.

We know today from the wonderful results of the excavations of recent years in the Indus Valley, in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, that already in the fourth millenium B. C. in the valley of the Indus, a high civilization flourished which in essential features shows a perfect agreement with the civilizations of Sumer, Elam and Mesopotamia. The screen is not yet lifted which veils the origin of this civilization, for we cannot read yet the inscriptions which we find engraved on the excavated seals, but there is no doubt that between the culture of Western Asia and that of northern India there must have been a close connection thousands of years before the Christian era. It is difficult to believe that this astonishingly high civilization—there were great cities with well-constructed houses, with baths and sanitary arrangements which even in the India of to-day are things one would yet wish to have—should have disappeared without leaving any traces in the later Indian civilization. It is true, we have not as yet been able to point out these connections. With the Vedic civilization that of the Indus Valley shows no kinship.² The traces of the Indian Siva cult, the Sakti worship and the Yoga which are believed to be seen in

2. Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indian Civilization*, London 1931, I, pp.110 ff,

isolated sculptural works of Mohenjo-Daro are more than doubtful.³

May be that the *Legend of the Flood* which we find in ancient Indian literature, which surely is connected with the Babylonian legend, the source of the Biblical Deluge, goes back to that extreme antiquity.

Also what we call the "*Indo-Aryan civilization*" points to the West. It may have been in the third millenium B. C. (it is impossible to give exact dates), when the Aryans, that is to say, some tribes akin to the Iranians, speaking a language belonging to the *Indo-European* group of languages, after crossing the Hindu Kush pushed into the Indus Valley, to spread further from there over northern and central India, where they developed that specific culture which in the course of centuries put its own uniform stamp upon the whole culture of India upto the remotest south, in spite of endless variety and difference. We call this culture "*Indo-Aryan*", because its chief bearers were Aryan-Indians belonging to the peoples speaking a language belonging to the Indo-European family of languages. If we speak of "*Indo-European*", we mean to say that there was something common which bound together the Indians in the extreme East and the Europeans, extending upto the Teutons in the extreme West (that is, Iceland). What this common thing is, is a matter regarding which there are still many erroneous views prevailing. This much only is certain, that it is *language* and *culture* through which these people were at some time united with one another. In fact, not only in the language, but also in the mythology, in the religious cult, in the social institutions and customs, many close agreements are found between the Indians and the Persians, and the Greeks, Romans, Celts, Germans, and Slavs.

But all this takes us back to pre-historical times, shrouded in darkness. When we come to historic times, we meet with, at least since the sixth century B. C., political, economical and spiritual connections between India and the West. In the year 538 B. C. Babylon fell and Cyrus founded the Persian Empire. About 510 B. C. his successor Darius made the Indus Valley a province of his empire. Thus the Persian Empire touched at one end Greece, and at the other, India. Through the Persians the Greeks became acquainted with the name *Indoi* (from the Indian word *Sindhu*, the name of the river

3. Marshall, op. cit. I, 48 ff., 52 ff.

Indus, which was made into *Hindu* by the Persians and into 'Indu' by the Ionians who could not pronounce 'h'). From the Persians the Indians obtained also the name which they gave to the Greeks, namely, 'Ionians' (*Yavana* in Sanskrit, *Yona* in Prakrit, *Yauna* in old Persian).

Again, two hundred years later, in the year 327 B. C. the Macedonian, Alexander the Great, penetrated upto the Indus and overran with his army the fertile valleys of the Punjab. On account of his premature death Alexander's great plans about India could not come into fruition. Ten years later the Greek sovereignty in the Punjab had come to an end. Very far-reaching, however, were the consequences of Alexander's presence in India. Colonists, descendants of the soldiers of Alexander, were left behind in northern India. Greek or semi-Greek principalities maintained themselves for some centuries in the north-west frontier of India. In the third century B. C. Seleukos Nikator, the successor of Alexander, sent *Megasthenes* as an ambassador to the court of the Indian prince Chandragupta who, like Alexander, wanted to found an Indian world-empire. From Megasthenes we obtain the most reliable information which the Greeks have given us concerning the social conditions in India at that time. Between 190 and 180 B. C. Demetrius extended the Bactrian kingdom right upto India and conquered Sind and Kathiawar. This Indian empire also was short-lived. But whilst the name of the great Alexander is not mentioned even once in the whole of Indian literature, at least one of the Greco-Bactrian sovereigns, namely King Menander, finds a place in Buddhist literature by reason of his interest in, if not adoption of, Buddhism.

But the relations of the West to India in ancient times were not merely of a warlike nature. We have enough evidence that the Indians already in ancient times had extensive trade relations with the West. Roman and Greek merchants found in India a well-developed sea-borne commerce, though trading vessels did not venture far away from the coast. More enterprising certainly were the merchants from the West. Since the Greek captain Hippalus made the discovery, about 45 A. D., that the monsoon wind could be utilized for navigation, the Greek and Roman merchants ventured with their ships into the deep sea. The Red Sea formed the chief artery of communication. But these merchants found also many harbours on the west coast of India into which wares were brought from the markets of the whole

of India. Since the Hellenization of Egypt through the conquests of Alexander, Alexandria became the centre of the exchange between the East and the West. Greeks, Syrians and Jews carried on the intermediate trade with India through Alexandria. The Roman Empire kept up an extensive trade with India. Among the Roman Emperors beginning from Augustus, and under the protection of the Pax Romana, the trade between India and Rome was flourishing.⁴ The articles of trade were spices of all kinds, especially pepper, which was brought to Rome in enormous quantities,⁵ Indian cotton which was used for fine stuffs, and above all, precious stones and pearls. India was known from the beginning as the land of diamonds. Pliny says, that "of all the countries, that which is richest in gems is India."^{5a} The moralists complained of the luxury which the Roman ladies enjoyed in wearing pearls and precious stones. Also ivory and tortoise-shell were made into ornaments. Monkeys, parrots and peacocks were imported from India to Rome, where women and children were very fond of keeping them.

Much smaller than the export of India was her import from the West. It consisted principally of lead, copper, glass, corals, and above all, of gold and silver coins. Already Pliny complains that the import of luxury objects from India drains too much gold from Roman trade. Roman coins were used for a long time especially in South India as ordinary currency.⁶ People had become so accustomed to these coins that Indian princes even struck Roman coins or imitated them. Indian princes brought also from the West Italian wines and Greek women. In the classical Indian dramas the king appears usually with a body-guard of Greek women.

With the decline of the Roman Empire this brisk trade between India and Rome came to an end. In the Middle Ages it was principally the Arabs who carried on the trade from India to the West.

4. Cf. H. G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1926, pp. 101 ff. E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*, Cambridge, 1928, pp. 181 ff. and Alfred Sarasin, *Der Handel zwischen Indien und Römern zur Zeit der römischen Kaiser*, Basel, 1930.

5. See now the instructive article *The pepper Trade of India in Early Times* by Dr. P. J. Thomas in Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar Commemoration Volume, 1936, p. 226 ff.

5a. *Terrarum autem omnium maxime gemmifera India.*

6. "Roman gold and silver coins are found in great numbers in Southern India and Ceylon, and it is probable that they were actually used as currency in these countries, while, in the North, the Roman gold coins may, perhaps, have provided some of the metal for the large gold issues of the Kusanas." E. J. Rapson, *Indian Coins* (Grundriss II, 3 B), p. 35.

Genoese, Florentians and Venetians brought the products of India which they took over from the Arabs to Western Europe.

With the tenth century began the invasions and conquests of the Mohammedans in India which continued for centuries, till in the sixteenth century the Mohammedan rule in India was established.

With the foundation of the empire of the Great Moghuls by Emperor Baber in the year 1526 begins the modern history of India. In the sixteenth century, however, there began also the struggles of the European Western nations for the Indian market. In the year 1498 the Portuguese sailor VASCO DA GAMA discovered the ocean way to India, and the Portuguese were the first to obtain possession of Goa in Southern India in the year 1509. And now begins the struggle, continuing for some centuries, between the Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, French and English for the exploitation of India—a struggle which led also to many bloody encounters on European battlefields. In the year 1761 this struggle ended with the decisive victory of England. It resulted in the foundation of the supremacy of the East India Company in Bengal, and at the end of the eighteenth century one could speak already of a "British Empire" in India. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, England had already become the leading Power in India. The Moghul rule, which gradually declined since the death of Aurangzeb, after the great successes of Emperor Akbar and his immediate successors, found in the year 1858 its final end, inasmuch as the dynasty was abolished and British sovereignty officially established.

We have seen that the trade with the Roman Empire was not disadvantageous for India, but brought gold into the land. But even Francois Bernier, the French doctor of Emperor Aurangzeb, could yet write in his description of the State of the Great Moghuls about 1670 that Hindustan "swallowed a great portion of the gold and silver of the world and found ways and means of bringing it from all sides into the country, leaving scarcely a single outlet for it."⁷

It was very different with the rule of the European Western people. India became an object of exploitation. The India, so much coveted for its wealth, became poorer and poorer. The terrible poverty in the Indian villages is one of the most painful impressions experienced by every visitor to India, and the most serious charge against imperialism.

7. See the German translation of Bernier's account of the State of the Great Moghul, published in Frankfurt A. M. 1671, p. 132, and Sarasin, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

This is not the place to trace the history of the British world-empire. But this history and a great part of the European political history of the present day is connected very closely with the British rule in India. No less a person than *Lord Curzon* who was Viceroy of India from 1898 to 1905, has said in one of his speeches⁸ that England for the sake of India acquired the Suez Canal in order to win Egypt, kept on the struggle with Russia for nearly one hundred years in order to keep her away from the frontiers of India, fought the Boer war, had to acquire a dominant position in Mesopotamia and control over the Persian gulf. "India forced us to take Aden, a possession of incomparable value, and to undertake the protectorship of the neighbouring parts of Arabia. India pointed out to us the way to such conquests which first stopped with the snow walls of the Himalaya and which raised us from a small island with trade and maritime interests to the position of the greatest land power in the world." For the sake of India England must acquire a powerful position in the Far East, by taking up relations with China and Japan. "It is thus clear," says Lord Curzon, "that the lord of India under modern conditions, must be the greatest power on the Asiatic Continent and consequently, as one may add, in the world." Lord Curzon then mentions the inexhaustible resources, the great harbours, the armies which India supplies and "which at any moment can be despatched to any point in Asia or Africa." India, so concluded his speech, is "a principal figure on the chess board of international politics." I need not say how even the politics of England during the world-war and since the world-war have been determined by the possession of India.

Let us now ask : What influence had these external—political and economical—connections between India and the Western World in ancient as well as in modern times upon the *intellectual and spiritual* relations between India and the West ?

I Have already mentioned how in the 6th century B. C. the great Persian empire under Darius touched Greece at one end and

8. This speech on the "Place of India in the Empire" was delivered by Lord Curzon before the Philosophical Institute of Edinburgh on October 19th, 1909, and printed in London (Murray) 1909. A German translation appeared, Berlin, 1910. A long extract from this is given by A. K. Viator, *Deutschlands Anteil an Indiens Schicksal*, Leipzig 1918, p. 21 ff.; from which I quote. Unfortunately I have not been able to get hold of the original of the speech in English. But similar ideas are already found in a speech held by Lord Curzon at a dinner given by Royal Society's Club in London, Nov. 7, 1898, s. *Lord Curzon in India*, London 1906, p. 8.

India at the other. In all probability the first spiritual contact between the Indians and the Greeks must have occurred by way of Persia. Still we can only make guesswork here. For Greek writers first speak of Indian wise men and Indian wisdom, of naked philosophers (gymnosophists) and world-renouncing hermits and ascetics after the time of Alexander. But what is most striking is the great agreement between the teachings of Indian and Greek philosophy. The teaching of the Upanisads about the All-One we find also among the Eleatics. When Xenophanes speaks of the unity of God and the universe, of the eternity and unchangeability of this One, when Parmenides explains that reality belongs alone to that which is one only, unborn, indestructible and omnipresent, whilst everything which exists in plurality and is subject to change is only an appearance, these are propositions which we find in the Upanisads and in the Vedanta and which have formed the flesh and blood of the Indians for two thousand and five hundred years.⁹ Likewise the agreements between the teachings of Empedocles and Anaxagoras and those of the Indian Sankhya Philosophy have been pointed out.¹⁰ Above all, we find in Pythagoras the doctrine of transmigration of souls in a form which comes extraordinarily close to the Indian doctrine of transmigration. Even the ritualistic practices of the Pythagoreans show a strong resemblance with Indian customs. It seems also that the so-called Pythagorean theorem of the quadrature of the hypotenuse was already known to the Indians in the older Vedic times and thus before Pythagoras.¹¹

In spite of all this we can only speak of the possibility of an Indian influence upon Greek thought in that age. For in the doctrines mentioned it is also throughout possible that the Greeks and Indians came to the same ideas independently of one another. As regards Pythagoras, however, it seems to me very probable that he became acquainted with Indian doctrines in Persia.¹²

9. That a far-reaching parallelism between Indian and Greek metaphysics, without any borrowing, whether it be of the Greeks from the Indians or *vice versa*, is to be assumed, is shown by W. Ruben, ("Zeitschrift f. Indol. u. Iranistik" 8 1931, pp. 147-227).

10. Cf. R. Garbe, *Die Sankhya-Philosophie*, 2nd ed. Leipzig. 1917, pp. 113 ff.

11. Cf. Bibhutibhusan Datta, *The Science of the Sulba*, Calcutta 1932, pp. 106 ff. On an alleged primitive form of the Pythagorean theorem among the Akkadians, cf. Ernst F. Weidner, H. Zimmern and A. Ungnad in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 19, 1916, 257 ff., 321 ff., 363 ff.; B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien/Kulturgeschichtliche Bibliothek I, 4/II*, Heidelberg 1925, p. 393, and O. Neugebauer in *Nachrichten der Göttinger Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften of 1928/ Mathemat.-Phys. Kl.* pp. 45 ff.

12. Cf. Garbe, op. cit. pp. 119 ff. Th. Hopfner, *Orient und griechische Philosophie*, Leipzig. 1925, cannot convince me that for the period of the 6th century B. C. to the 4th century B. C., all influence of the Orient upon Greek thought is to be denied.

It is also a much-debated question how to explain the occurrence of so-called "*Aesopian Fables*" in Indian literature. No doubt the beginnings of the Greek beast fable go back to the time of Hesiod, but the most flourishing period falls in the sixth and fifth centuries B. C., the time of Aesop, whom Herodotus already knew as the fable poet. The oldest Indian fables can be placed hypothetically only in the fifth and fourth centuries B. C. and some with certainty in the third century B. C. The great majority of Aesopian, as well as Indian fables, however, belong to a time when there was a brisk intellectual intercourse between Greece and India and when from the outset it was as much possible that Greek fables came to India as that Indian fables went to Greece. If we, therefore, find such fables (there are not too many of them) as that of "the ass in the lion's skin", "the ass without heart and ears", "the wolf and the crane", and others, which occur in India as well as in Greece, there is hardly any means of determining with certainty where they originally arose.

Not only fables, but also numerous stories and anecdotes are common to India and the West. The well-known story of *Solomon's Judgment*, taken from the Book of Kings, is found in a Buddhist narrative in the midst of a large number of stories of clever verdicts of judges. Similar stories play a great role in world-literature, and it is not possible upto now to determine with any certainty where they had their first home. But it is almost certain that they did not arise independently of each other but are to be looked upon as evidence of an intellectual intercourse between the East and the West.

Herodotus narrates the story of the *Wife of Intaphernes* who, when given the choice, whether she would like to have the life of her husband or her son or her brother saved, chose the last, because she ~~said~~ she might get again a husband or a son but could never get again a brother. The same argument is found in the "*Antigone*" of Sophocles. But also the Indian epic *Ramayana* narrates a similar anecdote, and that in connection with a proverb, which says that there is nothing more difficult to obtain than a brother. As the story is found in India, as well as in Greece, in very ancient times, it is hardly possible to say where it first occurred.

The comparison of similar narratives and motifs can in general lead only to the result that a mutual exchange of fables, stories and narratives took place for centuries between Greece and India, as well as between India and Western Asia, that the original home of many of the stories is to be sought in India, whilst that of others in Greece,

and that these stories moved from one country to another, like the goods of merchants. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff said once¹³ that the true home of the narrative topics which spread over the East and the West, was "the Hellenized Orient", that into the "Hellenic Ocean" all streams from the East and the West flowed, and in Hellenism the opposites between the East and the West were removed. If this is so, then surely into this "Hellenistic ocean" many a stream and many a river has flown whose origin is to be sought in *India*.

We stand on the firm ground of facts only when we actually find entire Indian story books pass through world-literature in translations. Thus the Indian story book *Pancatantra* which probably had its origin in the third century A. D., was already in the 6th century translated into Persian and soon after that into Syrian. In the eighth century followed an Arabic translation which was the source from which flowed so numerous translations into European and Asiatic languages, that the German translator Philipp Wolff could say of the book that "next to the Bible it had the largest number of translations into most of the languages of the world", and called it a book "which inspired whole nations and to which kings and princes paid attention and homage."¹⁴ In the twelfth century the book was translated into Hebrew, and in the thirteenth century, from Hebrew into Latin. The Latin translation was the source of the German translation which appeared in the year 1483 under the title, "Das Buch der Beispiele der alten Weisen",¹⁵ and which was one of the earliest German printed books. Thus it is no wonder that we find traces of the Indian narratives, referrible in the last instance to the *Pancatantra*, in the most popular story books of the Middle Ages, in the "Gesta Romanorum", in the French *fabliaux* in Boccaccio, Straparola, Chaucer, La Fontaine and even in the "Children's and Household Tales" of the Grimm brothers. Along with the literary, the oral transmission also plays not a small part, for which the intercourse of the Western Christians with the Oriental peoples during the Crusades, and again during the long rule of the Arabs in Spain, as well as the role of the Jews as intermediaries between the Arabs and the Western peoples has to be taken into consideration.

13. *Kultur der Gegenwart* I, 8, pp. 119.

14. Bidpai's *Book of the Wise*, Arabic translation rendered into German by Philipp Wolff, 2nd edition, Stuttgart 1839 I., p. XV.

15. "The Book of Examples of the Wise Men of Old."

But not only the *Pancatantra*, but also some later Indian story books have passed through translations into the literature of the West. It is even highly probable that "The book of Sindbad" also, which under the title, "The Seven Viziers" is found in the Arabic "Thousand and One Nights" and was known in Europe as the "Book of the Seven Wise Men", had its origin in India. Nay, "Thousand and One Nights" itself is, partly at least, an Indian book.

Theodor Benfey has traced, in his celebrated introduction to his German translation of the *Pancatantra* in 1859, the wonderful story of this book and the migration of these tales through world-literature in three continents. And of so many stories he could actually show the Indian origin, that he made the assertion that India was the home of all tales. To-day no one will be inclined any more to look upon India as the home of all stories and tales, nay, even to talk of any *one* country as the home of *all* tales. But nevertheless it still remains a fact to-day that numerous tales and narratives which have become popular in Europe, had their origin in India.

Of the Indian *drama* it is often said that its origin is to be sought in the Greek drama. But we know to-day that the beginnings of the Indian drama are to be traced to the old-Indian ballads and popular religious plays. The majority of the classical Indian dramas which are preserved to us show throughout a thoroughly national Indian character, which makes a foreign influence improbable. Nevertheless there is a class of Indian dramas which shows, on the one hand, a remarkable similarity with the Greek *mimus* (mime) and, on the other, with the dramas of Shakespeare. This is perhaps to be explained by the fact that the Roman *mimus*, which arose from the Greek, has influenced throughout the Middle Ages the folk-plays in Europe, especially, in Italy. From the Italian, however, the *mimus* came to the court of Queen Elizabeth of England and there influenced the art of Shakespeare. Now as an influence of the Greek mime on certain types of the Indian drama is not quite impossible, some agreements between Indian and Shakespearean dramas might thus be explained. Still we can here speak only of the possibility of influence. For it is equally possible that there used to be performances of itinerant comedians in ancient times in India as well as in Greece who, independently of one another, employed the same means for the amusement of the people, and that all actually existing agreements between the Greek *mimus* and the Indian and Shakespearean plays rest upon the fact that the same objects are attained by the same means.

There are two spheres where the influence of Greece upon India is absolutely undoubted. The first is *Gandhara art*. Gandhara is the name of north-western India including Afghanistan. And the art of Gandhara is the Buddhistic art from about the second century B. C. to the third century A. D. The oldest Buddhistic art monuments show us absolutely no representations of the Buddha, but symbols, like the wheel or the tree of enlightenment, take the place of the Buddha.¹⁶ It is, however, quite different with the artists of the school of Gandhara, standing under Greek influence. We now see everywhere, in monasteries, in sculptural monuments, in temples and *stupas*, figures of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, and only a glance is sufficient to remind us of the forms of Greek art. The Apollo type appears in the head of the Buddha ; the folds of the dress and the treatment of the drapery are also Greek.

As clearly as in the sphere of art is Greek influence evident in the sphere of *astrology* and *astronomy*. These sciences have no doubt existed in India from the remotest antiquity. But when the Indians became acquainted with the scientific character of Greek astronomy, they recognised its advantages and accepted its system and its scientific terminology. Extremely ancient is also the indigenous Indian astrology. But already in one of the older astrological works it is expressly stated : "The Greeks are indeed barbarians, but among them science is well-established ; consequently, they are to be honoured even like the Rishis ; how much more then should a Brahman be honoured who knows astrology ?" With the Greek word "hora" the portion of astrology dealing with the horoscope was described by the Indians.

It is not so clear with *medical* science. Surely the art of healing in India is very ancient and goes back to the time of the Veda. But some of the resemblances which occur between Indian and Greek medical art might yet be explained by the acceptance of Greek doctrines, just as the Indians later adopted from the Persians and Arabs many medicines. On the other hand, Indian medical works were translated very early into Persian and Arabic.

16. This is due not to any inability, on the part of the artist, to represent the human form, nor to any unwillingness for such representations, but it goes hand in hand with the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It was only when the person of the Buddha became the object of devotion/bhakti/that the need was felt for images of the Buddha and the Buddhisattvas. Cf. also Richard Fick, *Die buddhistische Kultur und das Erbe Alexanders des Grossen*, Leipzig, 1933, p. 26.

An extraordinarily high degree of knowledge was reached by the Indians independently, in *mathematics* and *geometry*, and the supposition that our numerical system is of Indian origin and the so-called "Arabic" numbers were borrowed by the Arabs from the Indians and transmitted to the European nations seems very probable, although it has been challenged by some scholars.

It is also probable that the *game of chess* which is mentioned in Indian literature as early as the 7th century A. D., was invented by the Indians and brought by the Arabs to Europe.

Whilst we could speak very doubtfully only of the influence of Indian philosophy upon the oldest Greek philosophy, there is no doubt that the doctrines of the *Gnostics* and the *Neo-Platonists* were influenced by Indian philosophy.¹⁷ There is no doubt also that the system of *Basilides* in the first half of the 2nd century A. D. was influenced by Buddhism. Like Buddha he explains suffering as the fundamental principle of all existence ; he teaches also the transmigration of souls in the Buddhist sense, and conceives, like Buddha, personality as a complex consisting of five elements.¹⁸

Here we must touch also the question of the relation between Buddhism and Christianity. For some time it was the fashion, especially in the freethinking circles, to accept as established the view, maintained by some historians of religion, of the dependence of the Gospels upon Buddhistic scripture, and to say that everything in the Gospels was "stolen" from Buddhism. In our days in Germany the "Tannenbergbund", founded in 1925 under the patronage of General Ludendorff, by the General's wife Dr. Mathilde Ludendorff, and under her guidance, took up the fight against Christianity as a piece of "foreign workmanship", in order in its place to set up a "German faith in God". With strange logic she rejects, on the one hand, Christianity and the Gospels as Jewish and un-German and, on the other, maintains that everything in Christianity is "stolen" from the Indians.¹⁹

17. Cf. Garbe, op. cit., pp. 127 ff. and W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, Göttingen, 1907, pp. 209 ff.

18. Cf. G. Kennedy, JRAS 1902, 377 ff. Garbe, op. cit., p. 128.

19. Cf. the polemics in the writings of Mathilde Ludendorff, *Von neuem Trug zur Rettung des Christentums*, München 1931 ; Pfarrer Roth, *Tannenbergbund und evangelischen Kirche/Volksschriften des evangelischen Bundes*, H. 36/, Berlin 1931 ; Johannes Hertel, *Von neuem Trug zur Rettung des alten oder Louis Jacolliot und Mathilde Ludendorff*, Berlin 1932 ; Ernst Schulz, *Amtliche Wissenschaft im Zeichen des Kreuzes, Eine Abrechnung mit Herrn Professor Hertel und Genossen*, München 1933.

Luckily this question has been taken up also by serious scientific inquiry, independent alike of theological and anti-Christian prejudices.²⁰

The fact is, that in the Gospels, especially in the Gospel of St. Luke, there are some few legends to which there are parallels in the legends of the Buddha. Also in particular sayings and parables of Jesus there are found echoes of similar sayings and parables which have been put into the mouth of the Buddha. But in these cases it is only a matter of resemblances or such universal thoughts as can easily be found in the sacred books of all religions and are in fact actually so found. And when we examine very closely the result of the comparison of the four Gospels with the Buddhist texts, we find that the differences are much greater than the agreements. The view must be rejected that Buddhist literature has exerted a *direct* influence upon the Gospels. Only this much can be said that, since the time of Alexander the Great, and especially in the days of the Roman Empire, there were so many spiritual connections between India and the West that a *superficial* acquaintance with Buddhistic ideas and particular Buddhistic legends is possible, and in some few cases even probable, in the circles in which the accounts of the Gospels originated.

Sure proofs of a knowledge of Buddhism in the West, however, do not exist until the 2nd and 3rd centuries A. D. And that is the time when the *Apocryphal Gospels* arose, in which we can at all events point to a series of borrowings from Buddhistic literature which are absolutely beyond all doubt. Likewise it is quite certain that one of the most popular books of the whole of Christianity in the Middle Ages, namely, the story of *Barlaam and Josaphat*, was composed by a pious Christian on the basis of the Buddha legend. For the framework of this story, the body of which is filled completely with the Christian spirit, is Buddhistic; the principal features of the Buddha legend find a place there and some of the parables introduced are well-known in Indian literature. The work was first composed in the 6th or 7th century A. D., in Pahlavi, a Middle-Persian dialect, and later translated into Arabic, Syrian and still later into Greek and Latin and numerous European languages, in 1220 A. D. also into German.

Christian influences in India cannot be proved in ancient times.

20. For a more detailed treatment, see my *History of Indian Literature* II, Calcutta 1933, 402 ff.

It is highly improbable that as early as the first century A. D., Christian teachers came to India, as is supposed by those who take the Thomas legend to be based on historical facts. Before the second and third centuries Christian missions are not to be thought of. Christian influences on the religion of devotion [*bhakti*], such as is taught by Krishna in the Bhagavadgita, have been wrongly conjectured. We know to-day that the doctrine of devotion in India goes back to pre-Christian days. It is only upon the later evolution of Hinduism that Christianity has exercised some influence—hardly any before the 12th century; in greater measure, however, only in the 19th century.

This brings us to the period of the British rule and the English influence in India which coincides with the period of the scientific discovery of Indian literature. It is Englishmen to whom we owe our first acquaintance with some of the celebrated works in Sanskrit literature. It was no less a person than WARREN HASTINGS, the true founder of English rule in India, from whom the first fruitful stimulus to the study of Indian literature came. He recognized that the rule of England in India was only assured when the rulers took care, as far as possible, to consider the social and religious susceptibilities of the natives. For the practical purpose of giving judgments in law-suits, he started, therefore, in the year 1773 the study of the old Indian lawbooks. A code which was compiled by the Brahmans, had at that time to be first translated into Persian and from the Persian into English, as there was no Englishman who understood Sanskrit.

Encouraged by Warren Hastings, CHARLES WILKINS then took lessons from the Pandits in Benares, the chief seat of Indian learning, and became the first Englishman to possess a knowledge of Sanskrit. As the first fruit of his Sanskrit studies he published in the year 1785 an English translation of the philosophical poem *Bhagavadgita*. Warren Hastings wrote a preface to this translation, in which he said that such works as the Bhagavadgita "will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance." Since then this devotional book of all Hindus has become a valuable treasure of world-literature. *August Wilhelm von Schlegel*, who in 1818 became the first German professor of Sanskrit in Bonn, edited this poem in 1823 with a Latin translation. Through this *Wilhelm von Humboldt* became acquainted with the work, about which he became so enthusiastic that he said that "this episode of the Mahabharata was the most beautiful, nay perhaps, the only true

philosophical poem which all the literatures known to us can show." He calls it in his letters "the deepest and noblest which the world has to show", and thanks his destiny that it has allowed him to live to be acquainted with this work.

Even more important than the work of Wilkins was that of the English Orientalist WILLIAM JONES. He came to India as a chief judge. Already in his youthful years he had occupied himself with Oriental poetry and had translated Arabic and Persian poems into English. Coming to India, he threw himself whole-heartedly into the study of Sanskrit. In the year 1789, he published his English translation of Kalidasa's drama "Sakuntala" which in the year 1791 was translated from English into German by Georg Förster. We can hardly form an idea to-day with what enthusiasm this Indian drama was received in the whole of Europe, and especially in Germany, in cultured literary circles. Like one of the seven wonders it came from the distant wonderland, India, and was received by men like HERDER and GOETHE with astonishment and delight.

If it was Englishmen who first made Europe acquainted with the spiritual treasures of India, it was yet the German scholars who soon took the lead in the newly established science of Indology. Already Heinrich Heine could say, "The Portuguese, Dutch and English have been for a long time, year after year, shipping home the treasures of India in their big vessels. We Germans have all along been left to watch it; to-day Schlegel, Bopp, Humboldt, Frank, etc. are our East Indian sailors. Bonn and Munich will be good factories." This prophecy has come out so true that an eminent Indian scholar, R. G. BHANDARKAR, who in 1886 came to the Congress of Orientalists in Vienna, could say that for only half-a-dozen French and English scholars there were already about twenty-five German scholars who were occupied with India. He named the Germans the Brahmans of Europe, but added regretfully that "as was the case in India the Brahmans of Europe have now taken a military occupation."²¹

The impulse for studying Indian literature was, however, first given in Germany by the romanticist, *Friedrich Schlegel*, through his booklet, "The Language and Wisdom of the Indians" which appeared in 1808. This book was written with enthusiasm and had the power

21. Bhandarkar's description of his impressions of the Vienna Congress of Orientalists in the Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 17, 1887, 88ff. is still worth reading .

of creating enthusiasm. Friedrich Schlegel expected from India "light on the history of the most ancient world, at present shrouded in darkness". People were accustomed at that time to speak of India as "the original home of the human race", or at least, as "the seat of original human wisdom." Everything which came from India was held from the beginning to be extremely old. In any case, it has since then become usual in Germany to speak of the wisdom of India." When we speak, however, of "Indian wisdom", we think usually, in the first place, of the philosophy of the Upanisads, of the already-mentioned Bhagavadgita and the sphere of Buddhistic thought.

The mystic, theosophical doctrines of the *Upanisads*, the latest branch of Vedic literature, which we can at least trace back to the 8th century B. C., had already influenced western thought in very ancient times. We have already spoken of the possibility that even Greek philosophy had been influenced by it. We must leave it, however, undecided whether here, as well as in Persian Sufism, and with the Christian mystics of the Middle Ages, where we find similar ideas, we have to suppose Indian influence or a parallel evolution. But there is no doubt that the great German mystic of the nineteenth century, *Schopenhauer*, was most strongly influenced by the thoughts of the Upanisads. What Schopenhauer owed to the Indians, he has himself expressed often enough. Plato, Kant and "the Vedas" (by this he means the Upanisads) he himself calls his teachers. The discovery of Sanskrit literature he characterizes as the greatest gift of the century and prophesies that Indian pantheism would become one day the faith of the people even in the West. Schopenhauer knew the Upanisads only through the "Oupnekhat", a Latin translation from Persian. The Persian translation was made in the 17th century, and this was translated into Latin by the Frenchman, ANQUETIL DUPERRON, who himself was an admirer of Indian thought and lived like an ascetic. Of this book "Oupnekhat" Schopenhauer said: "It is the most profitable and noble discourse which (excepting the original text) is possible in this world ; it has been the consolation of my life and will be the consolation of my death." The fundamental teaching of the Upanisads, however, is the same which, according to Schopenhauer, "has been at all times the mockery of the fools and the meditation of the wise", namely, the doctrine of unity, that is, the doctrine "that all plurality is only apparent, that in all individuals of this world . . . only the one and the same identical, truly existing Being manifests itself, present in all of them."

As Schopenhauer calls the Upanisads "the fruit of the highest human knowledge and wisdom", so *Paul Deussen* declares that to the Indian thinkers "had occurred, if not the most scientific, yet the most inward and direct revelation of the ultimate secret of being" and that in the Upanisads there were "philosophical conceptions which had not their equals either in India or anywhere else in the world." These are certainly very great exaggerations. But through Schopenhauer Indian thought has exercised an enormous influence upon Western spiritual life and through Paul Deussen, who has acquired great merit in Germany by his philologically correct translations of the Upanisads and other works of Indian philosophy, as well as by his first connected account of Indian philosophy, these influences have been further strengthened.

It is remarkable that Schopenhauer is enthusiastic also about *Buddhism*, in spite of the fact that its teachings do not agree with those of the Upanisads. He calls Brahmanism and Buddhism "the old, true, deep original religions." He declares that preference must be given to Buddhism over all other religions and adds, "In any case, it must please me to see my doctrine in such great agreement with a religion which is professed by the majority of the inhabitants of the globe."²² What drew him to the religion of Buddha is, on the one hand, the pessimistic fundamental view of life, the doctrine of misery, and on the other, the ethics of Buddhism. The morality of Christianity, he tells us in one place, is inferior to that of Buddhism and Brahmanism as it does not take into account animals. In his *Aphorisms and Fragments on Religion and Theology* he says, "Buddha, Eckhart and myself teach essentially the same thing. Eckhart does so in the fetters of his Christian mythology. In Buddhism the same thoughts are there, without being spoilt by such mythology, and therefore simple and clear, so far as a religion can be. In me there is perfect clearness." The fact is that the admiration of Schopenhauer for Buddhism rests upon a very defective knowledge of this religion, as in his time very little was known of the oldest Buddhist literature. Nevertheless Schopenhauer contributed much to the fact that in Germany also Buddhism found admirers and adherents.

Through Schopenhauer *Richard Wagner* became acquainted with Buddhistic ideas. Through the French translation of a Buddhistic-

22. This, however, is only true if we reckon all Chinese as Buddhists, which is hardly justified.

tic legend Richard Wagner was impelled to sketch the plan of the "Conquerors", from which arose "Parcival". The doctrine of salvation and the ethics of compassion of Buddhism affected him very much. To Mathilde Wesendonk Wagner wrote in the year 1859 : "You know how I have unconsciously become a Buddhist", and again, "Yes, child, it is a world-view, compared with which every other dogma must appear small and narrow." We meet with throughout Buddhistic ideas when Brünhilde in Wagner's "Twilight of Gods" says :

"Know ye whither I am going ?
Out of the Home of Desire I move away,
Home of Illusion I fly from for ever ;
The open gates of eternal Becoming
I close behind me ! . . .
Emancipated from rebirth,
The knowing one passes away."

Through Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner, *Karl Eugen Naumann* came to learn the Indian languages and to translate the canonical texts of the older Buddhism into German. His translations, although not always unobjectionable from the philological standpoint, appealed to the taste of the general reader,²³ and contributed much to the spread of knowledge of Buddhism, and still more to the propaganda work for Buddhism in Germany. It was through Karl Eugen Naumann's German translations, that the Danish poet *Karl Gjellerup* was led to make studies on Buddhism, from which resulted his beautiful poem, "The Pilgrim Kamanita", and other poems. As already in the Middle Ages, so also in modern times, the life of the Buddha stimulated many a poet to poetical expression. In the year 1879 *Edwin Arnold's* "Light of Asia" appeared which aroused so much enthusiasm that in England it had over sixty, and in America more than one hundred editions. Attempts to spread Buddhism also in Europe and America have been made again and again, sometimes with greater, sometimes with less success. There are neo-Buddhistic societies, journals and publishing offices which serve the propaganda in Europe as well as in America. Only two years ago the American, *Dwight Goddard*, founded an American brotherhood of followers of Buddha.²⁴

23. The more scholarly works on Buddhism and translations of Buddhist texts by T. W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg appealed more to the learned world.

24. Cf. Dwight Goddard, Followers of Buddha, an American Brotherhood, Santa Barbara, California, 1934.

Buddhism, however, does not stand here alone, but other Indian religions and world-views also found and still find to-day followers in the West. In America, especially, the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, to whom very recently *Romain Rolland* also dedicated writings full of devotion, have many followers.²⁵ Very recently there has also been in the West a growing interest in the Indian Yoga.²⁶

Now we must yet approach the question how the numerous contacts of the West with India have affected the *Indian* spiritual life. Here it must first be said that foreign rule to which India has so often been subject in the course of her history, has never been able to change essentially the peculiar character of the Indian spiritual culture or to give it a foreign stamp. What India has adopted of foreign cultural elements she has always herself worked up. When in September 1923 I delivered a lecture in Santiniketan to Indian students on the subject, "India and World-literature", the poet RABINDRANATH TAGORE, who took the chair, remarked how foolish it was when many Indian hyperpatriots did not want to acknowledge that anything in Indian literature was borrowed from the West. He said that Indians should rather be proud of being capable of digesting foreign ideas and working them out in their own way.

In fact, in this the Indian spirit has succeeded for centuries to the fullest extent. Nay, more than that. The foreign rulers of the land, such as for example, the Scythian kings who ruled over large portions of India from the second century B. C. to the third century A. D., have taken pains to be looked upon as Indians and to be included in the Indian cultural community. They accepted Indian religions and adopted Indian names. Kanishka in the second century

25. The recent Ramakrishna Centenary was celebrated not only in India, but also in Europe and in America. A Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Society was started in London in 1935. Cf. Prabuddha Bharata, August 1935, pp. 409 ff. See also B. K. Bagchi on "Adventures of Indian Philosophy in America", in Modern Review, Feb. 1936, 165 ff.; on "Vedanta Movements in the West" also Prabuddha Bharata, Feb. 1936, 227 ff., 268 ff.; on "Vedanta in U. S. A." Mrs. Donald Davidson, Prab. Bhar., April 1936, 354 ff.

26. A German publisher, Johannes Baum, Pfullingen 68 /Württemberg/ announced, in 1925, quite a number of works on Yoga, such as "Deutsche Yoga-Schulen,"/German Yoga Schools/, "Jeder Deutsche ein Yoga-Praktiker"/Every German a Yoga Practician/, etc. There exists also an international journal "Yoga", and Western psychologists show a growing interest in Indian Yoga. Cf. C. G. Jung on "Yoga and the West" in Prabuddha Bharata, Feb. 1936, p. 170 ff.

A. D. became a celebrated patron of Buddhism. He and his successors were the founders of Buddhistic monasteries and monuments. Still earlier we come across inscriptions of Greeks who had adopted one of the Indian religions. And again, in the time of the Great Moghuls, the Emperor Akbar tried to bring Hinduism and Islam together. He had before him the ideal of a new religion in which all that was best in all the different religions should be united. The Mahommedan rulers of the land also tried to appear not as foreigners but as Indians.

This has, however, become quite different under British rule, as the Indians have become more and more acquainted with European culture, with English literature and the thought-world of the West. Henceforth the Indian intellectual life has to record both gains and losses. It was certainly a gain, that the Indians through the English have become acquainted with the highest achievements of European culture and the intellectual treasures of Europe. In the first period of British rule, care was also taken that the connection with the ancient culture of India was not broken. But as the question was one of training the Indians for State service and administration of the land, the English found it advisable to have the higher school education fashioned after the English model. One relied on the dictum of the celebrated historian and statesman, *Macaulay*, who, though innocent of all knowledge of Oriental literature, nevertheless, declared that a single bookshelf of a European library was worth more than the whole of Indian and Arabic literatures. The élite among the native Indian population should, according to Macaulay, become "English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect, while remaining Indians in blood and colour."²⁷ Thus, above all, the newly-established universities in India were organized after the English model, with English aims of education and English language as the medium of instruction.²⁸ On account of the education so received, the Indians obtained at first offices in the subordinate ranks of the Indian administration, and later even in the higher ranks. Numerous educated young

27. Cf. J. Ghose, *Higher Education in Bengal under British Rule*, p. 93 ; also F. S. Marvin, *India and the West*, London, 1933, pp. 81 ff.

28. It is still remarkable that the Poet Mrs. Sarojini Naidu in a speech at a students' conference, from the national Indian standpoint, thanked Macaulay, because he introduced English as the language of instruction in India. The English language, she said, was a unifying bond of all Indians from Peshawar to Cape Comorin (see the report in the "Calcutta Review", April, 1935, pp. 99 f.).

men came also to England, received their education there and had thereby better prospects for an official career.

The introduction of the printing press in India has naturally given a tremendous impulse to literary production. Under English influence there has arisen, above all, in India a steadily growing journalism. That the Indian press to-day is one of the strongest weapons in the struggle with the British rule should not make us forget that the Indians have at least received this weapon from the English themselves.

Even the literature in the modern Indian languages, especially, the Bengali literature, has received from English literature a strong stimulus. English missionaries have helped to bring about the origin of Bengali prose. And there was a time when the English poets, Lord Byron, Keats, Shelley, the two Brownings and also Wordsworth exercised great influence upon Bengali poetry, and Walter Scott upon the evolution of the novel in Bengal. RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S first attempts in poetry were translations of pieces of English poems. In his "Reminiscences" the Poet says, "Our minds from infancy to old age are being moulded by this English literature alone."²⁹ Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats have exercised a specially strong influence upon his poetry.

The English system of education, however, was in no way an unmixed blessing for the Indians. Whilst universities and high schools were founded, the British Government had very little interest in the development of primary schools and the promotion of mass education. Thereby the gulf between the educated and the uneducated became still greater than it had been in the traditional social gradation in India. But even among those who had enjoyed a Western education there was often lacking that spiritual bond which would have produced a union between the old and the new. There arose thus a class of Anglicized, Europeanized Indians who had forsaken their spiritual homes without taking firm root in the European spiritual life. RABINDRANATH TAGORE once spoke in very bitter words of this ; he said that people had completely forgotten in the modern English education that the Indian spirit was something living and not merely a bookshelf which one could stuff as one liked with so-called education. "We have bought," said he, "eye-glasses at the cost of our eyes." And only recently an Indian professor exhorted his countrymen to take

29. Reminiscences, London 1921, p. 184.

from the West only the good and not the bad, and regretfully added: "As it is we are fast becoming a mere pocket edition of the Western people, imbibing again more of their vices than their virtues."³⁰

Happily, however, there were from the beginning many highly educated Indians who understood this, namely, to take the best from the Western ideals without losing connection with their own culture. The leading men of genius, like RAMMOHAN ROY, the great social and religious reformer in the beginning of the nineteenth century, RABINDRANATH TAGORE and MAHATMA GANDHI in our days, have always remained true Indians, although they are soaked in Western ideas. And however strong the European influences had been and still are, there still remained always the influence and the after-effect of the old Indian literature, of the epic and legendary poetry and, above all, the old Indian religiosity, preserved in modern Indian literature. On the whole, we can still say that the Indians, even under English rule and under the strongest Western influences, have hitherto understood how to assimilate foreign ideas and give them the stamp of the Indian spirit.

When we cast a retrospective glance, we see that Indians for centuries, nay, for thousands of years, have come in contact with the West. Orient and Occident are not only, according to *Goethe's* words, not to be separated, but history shows us that they were never separated, that the destiny of the one was always connected with the destiny of the other, and that between India and the West, there has always taken place in their spiritual relationship a mutual fertilisation, a give and take. We have seen that even in the days of the most primitive methods of intercourse, seas, mountains and deserts could not prevent the peoples from coming in contact with each other. There is no question that to-day, when through the achievements of technics all distances and difficulties of intercourse have almost disappeared, India and the West are brought much nearer to each other. Whether this is for good or for evil, will depend essentially upon what India will learn from the West, and the West from India.

There have been many changes indeed during the last few decades. Only fifty years ago many of the best men among the Indians looked at the Europeans with admiration and esteem. There were many who, like Tagore in his youth, were inspired by the ideas of

30. D. R. Bhandarker in the "Calcutta Review", September, 1933, p. 299.

freedom, brotherhood and universal humanity, which came to India from the West. They admired, and even admire to-day, the energy and the power of organization of the West, as well as its enormous superiority in the region of control over nature through the advance of technics. But *one thing* has disappeared to-day completely in India and that is the belief in the *moral* superiority of the Englishman and the white man. This belief in the moral superiority of the European the entire Orient has lost ever since it saw how the nations of Europe cut one another's throat during the World War, and because it has been noticing daily since the end of the War, how the once so highly prized ideals of freedom, brotherhood and humanity have disappeared from the nations of Europe, and oppression, hatred and violence have come in their place.

Certainly, there have been bloody wars in India also in ancient times and even in the modern age. India, too, had once the ideal of the warrior to whom the doors of heaven stood open. But since the time of Buddha, what has been valued by the Indians is the abandonment of hatred and violence, the sparing of all life as the higher, nay, as the highest moral ideal. Consequently, the Indians can have no admiration for European inventions, such as that of shooting innocent citizens from the air. Such a bombardment can arouse in them horror and fright, but they can never see in it any superiority, surely not a moral superiority.

In Europe there have arisen to-day the prophets of hatred and violence, like mushrooms coming out of the soil ;—in India there has arisen the prophet of love and non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi, who not only preaches non-violence but has also tried to introduce it in politics, though hitherto not with complete success. Whether Europe will learn from India the doctrine of love and non-violence, or India and the whole of the East will learn from the West the doctrine of hatred and violence—this is the fateful question for the future of the human race.

THE ASRAMA OF OLD AND BORODADA*

Reminiscences by Sudhakanta Roy Chowdhury

BORODADA is the Bengali way of addressing or referring to the eldest brother, and Dwijendranath Tagore was accordingly so called by our *Gurudev*, Rabindranath, and following him by Mr. C. F. Andrews, and later on by Mahatma Gandhi and other visitors, so that to non-Bengalis outside the Asrama he is perhaps better known by this term of affection than by name. *Borodada* Dwijendranath had retired away from the turmoil of Calcutta life into his little cottage, known as Nichu-bangla (the lower bungalow) on the outskirts of the Asrama bounds, an old structure with a red-tiled roof, overlooking the Bund Lake, and surrounded by a garden, somewhat removed from the traffic of the main road. This bungalow was used by his revered father, the Maharshi, while the Asrama was being laid out and its buildings were under construction, and here *Borodada* lived ever since, from the time the Brahmacharya Vidyalaya, as the Poet's school was called, was founded by his youngest brother in Santiniketan Asrama, till he became so much of an institution in himself, within that institution, that any picture of the one remains incomplete without the other, and in our reminiscences the two are inseparably connected.

The Brahmacharya Vidyalaya of those days was a simple unpretentious institution, in which teachers, workers and pupils lived together as one family, with no distinctions in their modes of life that might tend to keep them apart. The residence of our *Gurudev* was a small two-storied building with a corrugated iron roof in which he lived as simple a life as the rest,—a palm-leaf fan wielded by his own hands, and an earthen vessel of water kept in a corner from which he filled his own drinking pot, sufficing to carry him through the heat of the summer months. Though he had servants he preferred to do most of his petty household work himself, including the washing of his towel after his bath. *Gurudev* used to keep in closest touch with the teachers and workers, and I remember often seeing him pacing the *Sal* avenue with Ajit Chakravarti, or Jagadananda Roy, or one of his other pioneer lieutenants, for hours, discoursing on the ideals or problems of the institution, or talking about literature and art in general.

* Translated from the original Bengali by Surendranath Tagore.

At that time the institution had but little in the way of buildings. The oldest was a long, barn-like structure with a tiled roof, supplemented by a two-storied thatched hall at one end, on the ground floor of which was the library and a small laboratory, the rest of the building serving as a dormitory. There was another thatched shed, also used as a dormitory for the boys, which was called the "Theatre" because the dramatic performances and musical recitals, which have always been a feature of the institution, used to be held there. The pupils hailed from all levels of society, high and low, rich and poor, but, as I was saying, no distinction in their food or lodging was allowed to remind them of such differences. The older pupils cleaned the dormitories, made their own beds, and scoured their own utensils after meals, but there was a servant to look after the pupils of the Infant Class.

The classes were held in the shade of the mango groves, Jagadananda-babu's mathematics class sitting under the canopy of the sweet-scented *madhabi* creeper trained over the gateway. Not only during lessons, but also in the games, picnics, and other pastimes the teachers and pupils mingled and co-operated on equal terms. The younger pupils had no exercises to do by lamp-light, and after evening prayers, they would foregather in the rooms of the different teachers, turn by turn, and were told stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, or historical tales combining instruction and recreation. There was then no highly equipped stage, and in the "Theatre" hall of which I have told above, a low platform was knocked together, furnished with a crudely coloured drop-scene, and decorated with foliage and flowers on the occasion of each performance. The standard of simplicity in externals which the Poet thus held forth to his countrymen was not fully appreciated or accepted by them at the time, nor did funds permit of extension performances being given outside the Asrama ; nevertheless, its ideals of life and art gradually gained respectful recognition throughout the country.

Pandits Vidhushekhara Shastri and Hari Charan Bandopadhyaya between them used to take all the Sanskrit classes, even the lowest. The Poet, himself, would take the Bengali and English classes in the verandah of his own bungalow, or of the old Asrama building, often going through two or three periods at a stretch. Besides this work, in those days, he used regularly to attend the little office, looking over and auditing the Asrama accounts, as well as giving directions in regard to all the affairs of the institution.

Then, as now, a regular flow of visitors used to enjoy two or three

days' stay in the Asrama, well cared for by the teachers and pupils. The Poet's younger son, whom he lost later under tragic circumstances, used to take a special delight in ministering to the guests. He was in every way a miniature Rabindranath. Another feature of those days was that the teachers and other workers, such as clerks, kitchen superintendent, etc., were all on the same footing, and regarded one another as brothers. The pupils called them all alike, *master-mahashay*. The great thing was that human values prevailed over all others, social or even educational.

So much for the atmosphere of the old days as it lingers in our memories.

The bigness of Borodada likewise consisted in his naïve simplicity, his spontaneous recognition of human value, irrespective of age, erudition or rank. Though he was then over seventy years of age, he had kept up his habit of rising before dawn, summer and winter. His clothes, of his own special design, were as dignified in effect as they were easy and comfortable to wear. They consisted of two home-spun cotton *chogas* (a kind of long open-breasted gaberdine) one over the other, the first one worn the reverse way, its back serving as a shirt-front for the other ; these were supplemented by a second pair made of warmer stuff, for the cold weather. Thus attired he would take his morning stroll along the garden walk, to the accompaniment of a system of movement of the limbs devised by himself. He had a method of regulating his walk by holding his walking stick in a different way after each turn, so that the position of its handle automatically recorded the length of the ground already covered. When he had taken what he considered sufficient exercise he would go inside and sit in a cane chair facing his writing table.

This was an ordinary camp table on which lay his books, papers, and writing materials, the latter arranged in paper boxes—marvellous boxes of folded sheets of paper only, with closely fitting trays and compartments, also of folded paper—of his own make. This had always been one of his pet hobbies, and he had latterly worked out complicated mathematical formulæ indicating the size of paper and lines of folding that would result in boxes and compartments of any required shape or size. He delighted in making presents of these boxes to friends and visitors, and, on noting their surprise at the intricacy of the interior arrangements and the ingenuity of the hinges and locks, all made without the use of stitches or gum, he would burst out into his hearty, child-like laugh.

This same table would be temporarily cleared when Borodada's breakfast and his morning guests were ready. The guests arrived first. I do not know the names of all of them, but some of them were : four or five squirrels, three or four *saliks* (mynahs), one or two crows, and a solitary old dog, of some local breed. These came trooping in to time, and took their favourite seats,—on the architrave, on the arms or by the side of his chair, on his shoulders, and latterly, in the case of one enterprising mynah, on his head. There was no standing on ceremony, and they helped themselves, or were helped by their host, to the viands laid on the table,—whole gram, barley-meal paste (*sattu*), biscuits and slices of bread, Borodada having his tea and confining himself mostly to the *sattu*. The tea party over, Borodada would sit down to his literary work, at that period chiefly essays of a philosophical character, after donning his old-style spectacles with steel rims padded with cotton-wool over the nose and ears. While writing he would take occasional pulls at the coiled pipe of his *hookah*, filled with fragrant tobacco prepared in the Indian way.

From 6 or 7 to about 11 o'clock in the morning (his hours were not very regular) he remained thus engaged, and then indulged in a cold bath, a luxury he refused to forgo even when the Doctor forbade him. This was followed by his mid-day repast which was laid on the same table, tastefully arranged by his daughter-in-law, Hemlata-debi, on white-stone platters or in stone cups, consisting of rice and *dal*, a few dishes of fried or stewed vegetables, and sometimes a fish- or meat-curry, to the presence or absence of which last item he was indifferent. But he was particular about everything being properly set out in the orthodox Bengali way. Then came his siesta on a long easy-chair, during which, interspersed with short naps, he did some reading,—Walter Scott's novels, Don Quixote and Alice's Adventures being his favourites,—or pondered over his system of Bengali short-hand, another of his hobbies which he had elaborated for years, in which all the examples and exercises took the form of entertaining nursery rhymes of his own composition. His was perhaps one of the first of such systems, consisting of permutations and combinations of straight lines and wave-forms, which however was never popularised. If the subject on which Borodada was writing at the time engrossed him too powerfully, this period of rest was cut out, and he started to write immediately after his meal.

Later in the afternoon he would have another walk in the garden, followed by a second tea party, but this time the guests

would be human, both tea-drinkers and non tea-drinkers. Pandit Vidhushekhara (one of the latter kind)—called by us Shastri-mahashay—, Jagadananda-babu, Nepal-babu, Anil (Borodada's private secretary) and Mr. C. F. Andrews when in residence, were among those who regularly came round at this time, but not always all together. Mr. Andrews would read to him extracts from the news of the day, while Shastri-mahashay would be invited to discuss with him the subject on which he happened to be writing. Borodada's dinner was an early meal, beginning with *chapatis* (unleavened whole-meal bread) or *luchis* (fried pan-cakes) and sundry vegetable accompaniments, ending with a sweet dish in Indian or English style. After dinner he set to work again by the light of two or three candles upto 10 or 11 o'clock in the night, but sometimes absent-mindedly went on till much later, not seeming to feel the strain in spite of the burden of his seventy years.

Let me now treat the reader to a few characteristic anecdotes from my memory's store.

One evening as Dwijendranath was about to have his dinner, it suddenly occurred to him that he would like to have N.P.P. to join him. N.P.P. was his pet name for me, being the initials of three Bengali words meaning Pandit-*sans*-learning. The gardener was sent off to hunt me up, but he returned nearly half-an-hour later to report that I was not to be found. Having no previous intimation, I had gone out for a walk with a friend. But Borodada was grimly determined, and on his body-servant, Muniswar, he laid the stern behest : "Bring him to me from wherever he may be." Fortunately Muniswar met me as I was returning, and triumphantly haled me before his master ; whereupon the storm broke. "Nice young man, you are !" he raged. "You people now-a-days are so inconsiderate. It's past dinner time and you calmly say you were out for a walk: Am I to keep two or three servants to find you,—why on earth can't you do your walking somewhere near about ?" But his thundering was as short as it was sudden. Those who knew him simply waited till it was over. Trying to interpolate an explanation was useless, it only aggravated the disturbance. So I meekly sat down to dinner, making no attempt to remind him that he had never invited me for this evening. This had the desired effect of calming him, but the evening, on the whole, seemed rather unpropitious, for the rumbling started afresh. No sooner had he cast his eyes on his platter than with a vigorous shaking of head and waving of beard he flung out : "Ugh !

This will never do. The *luchis* are done brown, the brinjals fried black, even the top of the pudding is burnt :—take the wretched things away.” This being overheard in the adjoining room, where his daughter-in-law was looking after the serving, Hemlata-debi sallied out into the verandah. She knew how to manage him, right enough, and after she had had her say, little smiles began to flicker forth through the interstices of his luxuriant moustache, as he fell to, and with a sly wink towards me presently remarked : “The *luchis* may be a shade too brown, but they’re nice and crisp, and the brinjals are also quite tasty under their black crust. All I say is, why shouldn’t they look as well as they taste, eh ? This sort of hidden excellence is a bit misleading.” Later came a gust of his boisterous laughter as he scooped out a large second helping of pudding from the dish saying : “It’s delicious, but don’t you be afraid, young man, I’ll leave you your share.” After dinner my host sent for Pandit Vidhushekhara, dismissing me with : “Now N. P. P. you may make yourself scarce. The fare I’m going to offer Shastri-mahashay will be too tough for you.” Dwijendranath was then engaged on his Gita commentary, and wanted to read what he had written to the Pandit.

Another day, Borodada had been on a visit to his eldest son, Dwipendranath, known in the Asrama as Dwipu-babu, who had his quarters in the old Asrama building. While returning in his rickshaw he had to pass by the mathematics class held under the *madhabī* creeper, and noticed Jagadananda-babu administer a pummelling to one of his pupils. On reaching his bungalow, Dwijendranath indited a Bengali couplet to the effect that by hammering you cannot make an ass into a horse, but may turn a horse into an ass. This he sent on then and there to Jagadananda-babu who, when he read it, burst out laughing. The boys naturally wanted to know what it was all about. Jagadananda-babu’s exceeding love for his pupils was too well known for them to take his attempts at chastisement seriously,—he only posed as a martinet during class hours, but gave the boys every indulgence when they went to his quarters. He now rebuked them : “What’s that to you, you young scamps ? Just you go on doing your sums !” Eventually, however, he could not resist the temptation of reading the couplet out to them, asking the culprit : “Well, you young donkey, what have you to say for yourself ?”—“I’m a horse, sir !” promptly spoke up the unblushing youngster. Dwijendranath was hugely amused when he heard of the boy’s reply. “I hope you didn’t mind my little joke—” he began apologetically, when he next met

Jagadananda-babu. "That's all right, sir," interrupted the latter, "but just fancy the little monkey claiming to be a horse,—that won't spare him the rod!"—"I pity the poor horse," laughed Borodada. Anyhow, all his pupils look back with love and pride to the days they passed under Jagadananda-babu's affectionate care.

One morning while Dwijendranath was absorbed in his writing, a Brahmin beggar, who had managed to elude the gardener's vigilance, stepped up to the verandah in front of his table, and no servant being about at the time, stood there reciting his tale of woe. Immersed in his work, a plaintive murmur fell on Borodada's ears, but its meaning failed to reach his mind, so that he kept on muttering mechanically: "Yes, yes," or "well, well," or "I don't want any, thank you," at intervals. When at length he came to the end of a chapter, he raised his eyes, and, perceiving a stranger, asked him what he wanted. "I'm in great difficulty, sir, for the expenses of my father's *shradh*, and come to ask you to help me out," said the Brahmin. "Why didn't you say so before?" flared up Borodada. "I've been trying to do it, sir, for the last hour," protested the mystified beggar. "Nonsense!" cried Borodada. "D'you mean to tell me I've been asleep? It's no good trying to fool me!" The Brahmin was about to explain, but Borodada cut him short: "Now, now, you mustn't be wasting any more of my time." With which he shouted: "Call Anil!"—"I don't know Anil-babu, sir, or where he is," remonstrated the beggar. "O Lord," groaned Borodada, "what makes the man think I wanted *him* to call Anil? I don't know why Hemlata keeps all these servants. Not one is around when wanted.—Muniswar! Muniswar! here's an unfortunate man wanting help, who's been made to wait here the whole morning. Call Anil, will you?"—"Look here, Anil," said he when his secretary appeared, "give this poor fellow five rupees, please."—"One will do," Anil tried to hint in English. But Borodada was now thoroughly roused. "You needn't air your superior wisdom," said he. "If what he says is false my loss will be only five rupees, but if it's true he'll suffer much more without it." Whereupon the discomfited secretary asked the Brahmin to follow him. "No, no," insisted Borodada, "I don't trust you out of sight with your 'one will do.' Bring the money here!"

Once when I arrived to pay my respects after breakfast as usual, I found Borodada with bandage over one eye. "It's that rascal of a mynah who sits on my head," he informed me in reply to my anxious look. "I wish I'd shooed him off from the beginning. The fellow

had his choice of biscuit, bread and banana, but he needs must have a taste of my eye ! It's lucky he didn't peck a hole in it. Next time he tries his tricks I'll teach him ! Goodness knows how I'm to finish my chapter now." Another morning the bungalow rang with shouts of "Muniswar ! Muniswar !" at which that worthy domestic came hurrying up to his master. A squirrel had run up Borodada's sleeve, and, unable to find its way out again, was kicking up a rumpus inside. "If you be pleased to stand up, sir," suggested the imperturbable Muniswar, "and hang your arm straight down, I shall get him out." No sooner said than done, whereupon due punishment was meted out to the delinquent in the shape of a couple of soft taps of Borodada's forefinger on his back, followed by a consolatory piece of biscuit in his mouth, with which the unabashed creature scampered off to a bough of the nearest tree where he sat nibbling away at it in full view. Incidents such as these did not interrupt Borodada's relations with his furred and feathered friends. As for the old dog, he had gone nearly blind, but turned out to have a very shrewd idea of his own interests. When, on the passing away of Borodada, he felt he had lost his natural guardian, he made his way straight to Gurudev's house, at the opposite extremity of the Asrama bounds, and adopted the brother as substitute, ignoring the houses of so many other people known to him that he had to pass on the way. I need hardly add that Rabindranath accepted this appointment, and cared for the old fellow till the end.

When Mahatma Gandhi came on his memorable visit to the Asrama, Dwijendranath fell in love with him at first sight. Through this selfless ascetic, he felt, India with her poverty-stricken masses could best find her self-expression. Gurudev's admiration for Gandhiji was equally unstinted, nevertheless, certain differences of outlook and method remained outstanding between them ; and in regard to these Borodada's old-world conservatism impetuously inclined towards the Mahatma. Well do I remember the scolding he gave one morning to Rabindranath—whom he never got out of regarding as an over-enthusiastic youngster, apt to be carried away by his imagination, and so in need of occasional admonition,—for not surrendering his institution to the guidance of this superman who had moved the whole country as the Poet himself could never expect to do. That same evening, however, Borodada must have felt that he had been unjustly severe, for he said : "Rabi's ideal is a grand one, of offering hospitality to all the cultures of the world ; but it's too grand to be understood

except by a very few. It'll take ages for the country to rise to its height. Meanwhile Rabi is no longer strong,—how can his health bear this continual strain? That's what alarms me." When I tried to cut in with my idea of an eclectic utopia for our country, in which only the best of what was foreign would be taken in, and from which only the worst of what was indigenous would be cast out, he wagged his head and laughed at me for an unpractical N.P.P. "That comes unkindly from you, sir," I broke out,—for there was no end to the latitude of speech and manner which our sage allowed us,—“was it not you who advised your cook to fry *luchis* in water?” This touched off one of Borodada's explosive guffaws. “So that story has reached you too!” he shouted, as he made me wince with a heartier than usual smack on the back. “It's all over the place, sir,” I continued mischievously. “They all tell it of you.”—“Let me tell you then,” said Borodada, “what exactly happened. I wanted to impress on our old kitchen-maid that it was better to learn by experiment than by hearsay. ‘You fry *luchis* in liquefied butter because you have been told to do so,’ I pointed out by way of illustration, ‘but in water you have a ready-made liquid; you should have satisfied yourself first whether *luchis* can't be fried in it as well.’ My point failed to get home, but was bandied about instead, all over the family, in the shape of this story.”

The following I have from a nephew of Borodada, who was in charge of the joint estates, and to whom his uncle used to confide his business requirements.

Early in life Dwijendranath had unmistakably displayed, much to his revered father's disappointment, an utter unfitness for taking his place as the head of the household in regard to its wordly concerns. The Maharshi thereupon relieved him from all duties in connection with the estates, and bestowed on him, as his eldest-born, a special annuity for life. Even this he had a tendency to fritter away in indiscriminate gifts, so that eventually his eldest son, Dwipu-babu, and daughter-in-law, Hemlatadebi, became his *de-facto* guardians, and kept him on a strict allowance so far as his charities were concerned. He gladly welcomed this topsy-turvy relationship which left him free to give himself up to his philosophy and his mathematics, his paper-boxes and his projected *magnum opus* (!) on Bengali shorthand. It was amusing as well as pathetic to find him occasionally sending his nephew on a begging expedition to these “authorities”, asking for a little extra grant for some impulse or whim of his.

Dwipu-babu died before his father, at a time when a family settlement, to be executed by Dwijendranath, was in progress. Borodada, to all appearance, seemed dazed rather than grieved at his bereavement,—he felt more like an orphan left stranded, than a father losing a son. He timidly inquired of his nephew : “Have you looked into Dwipu’s will? I hope he has left me enough to go on with !” It took some doing to get Dwijendranath to realise that he was the *pater-familias* and that it was for him to complete the family settlement, reserving as much as he wanted for himself. Once he got the idea, however, everybody was surprised to see how he rose to the occasion, developing a sturdy commonsense as well as resolute firmness in adjusting the equities between the members of the family dependent on him, while not abating the modesty of his own requirements. The Calcutta lawyer, who came up to get the Deed of Settlement executed, confessed to having had his doubts, before arriving in Santiniketan, whether his client about whose child-like behaviour so many fanciful stories were current, could be said to be legally competent to dispose of his large property. But on seeing the vigorous way in which the grand old man shook his head whenever any insidious clause, not compatible with his sense of justice, was suggested, he averred that he was now prepared to swear that the Settler not only knew perfectly well what was what, but had a most decided will of his own to boot.

A somewhat strange experience appears to have occurred shortly before Borodada’s death. The wife of this same nephew was then staying as a guest with Hemlata-debi in an annexe of the Nichu-bangla. Her relations with Borodada were of a formal character, in pursuance of which she paid her respects to him for a few minutes every afternoon, conversing chiefly about family matters. One day she had barely completed her obeisance when, to her utter surprise, he suddenly accosted her excitedly with the words : “Let me tell you, my daughter, I have been forgiven !” At her expression of blank astonishment he went on : “Yes, I’ve been forgiven. How grievously I have sinned, only I know,—but I’ve been forgiven. I am sure of it : I have been forgiven !” A niece does not stare at the face of her uncle-in-law,—but she could hardly help it : his voice was so vibrant with ecstasy as he fervidly uttered these words. He had evidently just received some mystic message which he felt impelled to share with the first one he came across. .

THE MEANING OF A POEM*

(Chapter from "*A Diary of the Five Elements*")†

Rabindranath Tagore

SROTASWINI said to me: "I should like to hear you read out to us your new poem about Kach and Debjani."§

This uplifted me with a touch of pride ; but Deepti was there to see to the subsequent fall. "I hope you wont mind," she said, "if I tell you that I've been unable to find any special meaning or message in this poem of yours. Frankly, it's not up to much."

Inwardly I made reply : "It would hardly have harmed the world or hurt the truth, had you expressed yourself a little more modestly. There's nothing so strange in a poem having defects, but neither is a defect in the reader's understanding beyond the bounds of possibility." Outwardly I said: "Though the writer is often convinced of the merit of his own work, there are plenty of instances in history where such conviction has been found wrong. On the other hand, also, history doesn't wholly lack instances of critics not being infallible. The one thing free from doubt is, that my poem hasn't appealed to you. That's, of course, my misfortune,—it may possibly be yours too."

"*May be !*"—snapped Deepti, taking up a book and making as if engrossed in it.

After this, Srotaswini did not venture to repeat her request.

Vyom, turning his eyes towards the window, seemed to be addressing some one in the distant sky, as he observed : "Talking of meaning and message, I've gathered one from your last poem."

"Hadh't you better tell us first," put in Khiti, "what it's all about ? For I must now confess,—though my regard for our Poet made me keep it back so long,—that I haven't read the poem."

"Then listen," said Vyom.

'Kach, the son of Brihaspati, preceptor of the Gods, was sent over to the seat of Shukra, preceptor of the Titans, to learn from him

* Translated from the original Bengali by Surendranath Tagore.

† See footnote under the article "Laughter" in Vol. II, Part II.

§ The Bengali, not the Sanskrit, pronunciation is followed in the transliteration.

the Secret of Life. There Kach stayed a thousand years and, with the help of Debjani, Shukra's daughter, whom he captivated with his singing and dancing, he eventually succeeded in his object. When the time came for his parting with Debjani, she declared her love for him and begged Kach not to leave her. Though Kach returned her love, he did not accede to her prayer, but loyally took back his prize to the realm of the Gods.

"—That's all there is to the story. It differs a little from the version in the *Mahabharata*,—but very slightly."

Khiti pulled a wry face. "The story's all right," said he, "so far as its size goes. What I'm afraid of is, that the meaning your sleight-of-mind will draw out, may be far too lengthy to have been really in it."

Ignoring Khiti, Vyom commenced : "It has to do with the Body and the Soul."

Alarm was visible on the faces of all the "elements".

"Let me escape," exclaimed Khiti, "body and soul, while yet there's time !"

Samir dragged Khiti back into his chair by the skirt of his tunic, crying : "What ! Let you desert us in this moment of danger ? Not a bit of it !"

This by-play was lost on Vyom, who continued :

"The Soul has come from Heaven to the seat of world-life, in order to gain wisdom from its joys and sorrows, its victories and defeats. So long as the period of his endeavour lasts, he must pay his court to Body, the daughter of the world. And wondrous are the arts and devices he knows with which to do it. He plays with such heavenly skill on her sense-strings, that it spreads for her a mirage of emotion over the world, and sounds and colours and scents, casting off their materiality, sway and throb to it in ecstatic dance."

Vyom sat up straight in his chair, the vacant gaze of his dreamy eyes lit up with enthusiasm, as he pursued his idea :

"If you look at it in this way, a veritable love story is being played within each human being.

"—See how Soul excites his supine partner, Body, who clings to him for support,—how on her eyes he showers Beauty, to the end of which her sight cannot reach ; into her ears pours Music, the meaning of which her hearing cannot fathom ; rousing in every cell of hers a longing that can never find its satisfaction from her own powers. In her turn, this companion of his, enlivened out of her stolidity, enfolds and smothers him in the softness of her multifarious

embrace, gradually subduing his powers ; and like his shadow she cleaves to him, ministering to his pleasure with unfailing devotion, keeping her own limbs and senses ever fit for his service, so that his exile may not seem too much of an exile to him.

“—Yet, in spite of all this love, there comes a day when Soul flies away, leaving his companion, so long unwaveringly attached to him, helplessly prostrate. ‘I must leave you, dear,’ says he to her, ‘with no more than just a sigh at parting.’ And Body, clasping his feet, replies : ‘Beloved, if leave me you will, like a handful of dust thrown back on the dust, why did you glorify me so long with your love ? Alas, I know I am not worthy of you, but why then did you come from the other shore of Time, through the darkness of mysterious night, to keep tryst in the seclusion of this temple, lighted with the lamp of life ? What quality had I that so enraptured you ?’ But to her piteous pleading no reply is vouchsafed by the departing Unknown, as he vanishes, none can guess whither.

“—Just think of this cruel rupture of such life-long bond, this fruitless, despairing appeal of Body to her Lord,—is there a more heart-rending bereavement depicted in any love poem ?”

Apprehending a humorous outburst from the expression of Khiti’s face, Vyom gave him no opening, but went on, :

“Perhaps you don’t agree that this can be called love, and think I’m only elaborating a figure of speech. But that’s not so. This was the first appearance of love on earth, and it had all the fervour of first love. When it originally came into the world, land had not yet definitely separated from water, nor was there any poet or historian at hand,—but that was the day when it once for all proclaimed, amidst the slime of the immature earth, that this world is not a machine. Some Will, impelled by ineffable joy, raised out of the slime the lotus, and on that lotus the devotee now sees enthroned Lakshmi, goddess of Beauty, and Saraswati, goddess of Emotion.”

Khiti was no longer to be repressed. “I’m indeed thrilled”, he declared, “to learn of this poetical drama at play within us ! At the same time, I’m free to confess that this flighty behaviour of Soul towards poor, trusting Body, doesn’t recommend itself to me. At any rate, it’s my fervent hope that my own particular soul may prove more constant, and tarry ever so long in the bower of my Debjani-body,—which I trust all of you will join me in wishing.”

“But my dear Vyom,” protested Samir. “Never have we heard such un-*shastric* exposition from you. You’ve been talking like a

Christian ! The soul coming down from heaven into the world to gain development by passing through its joys and sorrows,—this surely is an idea that doesn't at all fit in with your old-time views."

"Don't hunt for consistency in ideas of this order," replied Vyom. "In fundamental matters I've no quarrel with any creed. In the commerce of the world every nation uses its own coinage—of which the value depends on the facility with which it can move the goods. The idea that the soul comes into the school of the world to gain wisdom from sorrow and joy, adversity and prosperity, is a coinage of religion that provides the capital for leading of a good life,—so I do not hold it to be spurious. The bank-notes, again, on which I rely for the commerce of my own life, are likewise honoured by the Bank of Providence."

"Forbear, for goodness' sake !" pleaded Khiti pathetically. "The allegory of love becomes hard enough as it issues from your mouth ; if you now start on commerce, that will export me hence right enough. I'm feeling weak this morning, and your contagion is infectious. With your permission I'd like to extract my own meaning from the poem."

Vyom indulgently leaned back on his chair, stretching his legs over the window sill, whereupon Khiti began :

"To me it appears that the main idea of the evolution theory lurks in the poem. The meaning of the Secret of Life is the art of carrying on life in a changing world. It's clear that there's a Prime Mover cultivating that art,—who's been doing so through the ages. But his love for the creatures through whom he works, is only temporary. As soon as the experiment with one set of them is over, this ruthless lover, by whom they were possessed for the time, unhesitatingly throws them over to destruction. In every layer of the earth is recorded the dying wail of these deserted ones——"

Deepti had not yet recovered her equanimity. She sharply interrupted Khiti with : "If these are samples of the meanings you're going to extort from the poem, you can make up any number of them. The fire goes off leaving the wood in ashes, the butterfly flits away from the torn chrysalis, the fruit grows out of the shrivelling flower, the shoot pierces through the heart of the seed,—heaps of such can be piled up."

"You're right," agreed Vyom, taking her seriously. "But what you call different meanings are but so many examples of the one central idea, which let me put to you.

Progress through the world-life requires the use of at least two feet. When the left foot is planted firmly behind, the right foot can be lifted to move forward, and when the right foot has found lodgement in front, the left, in turn, can free itself to do likewise. That's to say, we must alternately enter into bonds, and cut through them. We must love, and also desert our old love—this is the greatest tragedy of the world, and through such suffering must be our progress. The same is the case in our social system. When some old tradition brings us to a standstill, a revolution has to come to our rescue and restore our freedom of movement. Providence has decreed for us the pangs of separation from the old, at each new step we take."

Samir remarked : "Both of you have overlooked the curse with which the story concludes. When Kach, having attained his end, broke through the bonds of Debjani's love to return homewards, she laid her curse on him saying : 'You may give up to your people the secret you have wrested from us, but you shall never be able to avail of it for yourself.' I have a meaning to suggest which takes in this curse, if you can find the patience to listen."

"I don't say beforehand," Khiti was good enough to assure him, "that my patience will give out. Nor do I dare promise to keep it till the end, lest I prove false. Anyhow, go ahead. If, later on, your heart inclines to pity us, all you need do is to come to a stop."

Samir proceeded : "Let's call the art of living a full, a beautiful life, the Secret of Life ; and let's take the case of the Poet, born into the world to learn and teach that art. With his heavenly gift the Poet charms the world and wins the secret. Not that he doesn't love the World, but when she proposes that he should make her life his own, he refuses, saying : 'If I allow myself to get caught in the world-life, to be drawn into its vortex, I shall never be able to communicate the secret I have learnt. So, though I live in the world, I must remain aloof from it.' Then does the World in turn, lay on the Poet the curse : 'You may communicate the art you have learnt to others, but never shall you be able to use it for your own benefit.'

"—It's because of this curse that we see the Master influencing the lives of others, but remaining as a child in his own lack of effective wisdom. For, what is learnt from the heights of aloofness, may be the more clearly realised by such on-looker, but unless he is actually engaged in the commerce of life, he cannot become proficient in making practical application of his attainment. In the old days the Brahmin was valued as a minister, and the King benefited by his

advice. But where the Brahmin was actually put on the throne, he found himself utterly at sea.

"—However, the different meanings we've been suggesting are after all of the surface. Suppose, for example, it be said that the message of the *Ramayana* is, that sorrow has to be suffered even by one born into a king's estate ; or of Kalidas' *Sakuntala*, that, given favourable conditions, love grows between man and woman in spite of all barriers,—does that tell us anything particularly new or edifying ?"

Srotaswini, who had for some time been hesitating on the brink, now joined in with her plea: "But I think it's exactly these ordinary things that poems make real to us. Like a relentless hunter pursuing his quarry from cover to cover, unending sorrow dogged Rama and Sita throughout their lives, in spite of all the elements of happiness with which their royal birth had endowed them. It's their simple, affecting story, apart from any deeper significance, that has attracted and stirred the hearts of men from age to age.

"—What if *Sakuntala's* story doesn't happen to carry the burden of any special message, but merely recounts the thrice-told tale of some favourable opportunity, be it for good or evil, that has allowed love to come with irresistible force to unite the hearts of a man and a woman with everlasting ties? Ordinary men and women have enjoyed it, and still enjoy it, because it vividly tells of this ordinary thing that happens in their lives.

"—People expound in so many ways the 'inner,' meaning of the episode in the *Mahabharata*, about the attempted disrobing of Draupadi frustrated by divine grace,—for instance, as an allegory referring to the attempts of Death to rob mother Earth of her covering of green life, in spite of which she, by the grace of God, has her verdant robe renewed age after age, to remain as fresh as ever. But when, as we are told the story, our blood boils at the outrage committed, in the very presence of the king and his kinsmen, of the shaming of a defenceless woman, and our eyes overflow on the timely intervention of a divinity to save the modesty of his devotee—, is it because of any underlying significance ?

The scene of the last separation of Kach and Debjani, also, is just the old and yet ever-new tale of lovers' parting. Those who look down on the simple meaning are not true tasters of the joys of poetry."

Samir appealed to me with a smile: "Now that Miss Srotaswini

has decreed our exile from the realm of poetry, what has the Poet himself to say to it ?”

Abashed and penitent, Srotaswini repeatedly disclaimed any intention to sit in judgment.

“Well,” I summed up, “I can’t say I had any particular message in mind when writing the poem. But, by your favour, I now see that it’s not devoid of meanings, nay, that it holds more of them than a dictionary !

“—A poem has this peculiarity that the creative power of the poet evokes the creative power of the readers, who, according to their several temperaments, find in it some beautiful thought, or moral lesson, or philosophic truth. The poem is a lighted match and like fireworks are the readers who, at its touch, variously shoot up into the sky, or shower forth a fountain of sparks, or explode loudly.

“—And yet I don’t find myself in disagreement with Srotaswini. There are some who assert that the stone is the most important part of the fruit, and cite science in their own support. Others are out for the flavour of its pulp and throw away the stone. As for those who, in their eagerness to enjoy the emotional quality of a poem, are indifferent to such lesson or truth as it may also embody,—I, for one, cannot find it in my heart to blame them. And those who are concerned only with the edification to be gathered therefrom,—I also wish them joy. Let each render up thanks for what is received. Why get excited over it ? Quarrelling never pays !”

KACH AND DEBJANI*

Rabindranath Tagore

[The Gods, in order to be able to cope better with their enemies, the Titans, sent young Kach, the son of their preceptor, Brihaspati, to the land of the Titans to learn the secret of immortality from the Sage Shukra who taught the latter. The Sage's daughter Debjani fell in love with Kach.]

Kach. And now, Debjani, I beg leave to depart to the native home of the gods. My lessons at your father's feet are over today. Bless me that this knowledge may ever shed its light on my life, like the rays of this morning sun on yon snowy summits.

Debjani. You have attained at last what you could hardly ever hope for. The knowledge vainly coveted by the gods for ages is now yours. But tell me, have you nothing more to ask ?

Kach. Nothing indeed.

Debjani. Nothing at all ! Probe into the uttermost depth of your heart and feel if no keen-pointed desire lingers somewhere, stinging like a secret thorn.

Kach. I find no vacant spot in my heart that waits for further fulfilment.

Debjani. Then you must be the one happy being in creation. Go back to your Paradise to add to its splendour your own achievement. There music waits to welcome you with its flourish, and conch shells shall be blown and flowers strewn over you, and a heavenly choir will announce your arrival. Ah, Brahmin, you have indeed spent dreary days here, in an alien land, pursuing a hard task, with no one to relieve the desolation of exile with the delight of a happy home. And though we offered with devotion all the poor resources that we had, how could that make up for the perfection of Paradise, for the vision of a celestial beauty ? I only hope our guest will forget our fruitless service after he returns to his Land of Bliss.

Kach. Nay, not thus with reproach, but bid me farewell with a gracious smile.

Debjani. Smile ! Alas, my friend, this is no Paradise. Smiles are not so cheap in this world, where thirst, like a worm in the flower, gnaws at the heart's core ; where desire, like a baffled bee, hovers round

* Translated from the original Bengali by the Editor.



KACH AND DEBJANI

(Fresco by Abanindranath Tagore at the Govt. School of Art, Cal.)

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and round the closed petals of its lotus. Here Memory broods and sighs in the deserted nook of departed joy. Go, friend, nor waste any more of your precious time ! The anxious gods——what, already leaving ! Ten hundred years of our fellowship must be extinct in a moment in a few meagre words !

Kach. Debjani, tell me how I have offended.

Debjani. Alas ! This forest that has lavished its love on you for numberless days in its shade and murmur and bird-songs is to be dismissed at last with such a careless unconcern ! These trees today seem to droop, the shadows deepen, the wind wails and you alone must slip away with a smile, like a happy dream at dawn !

Kach. Debjani, I cherish this forest as a second motherland, with an unwaning love, for here I have been born anew.

Debjani. Here is the banyan tree, beneath whose branches you came everyday to rest in the heat of the midday sun. Over your tired limbs it spread its peace, whilst its rustling leaves lulled you to sleep. Go, comrade, if you must, but not before you have lingered for a while, your last while, under this familiar tree and taken back with you the last sighing message of its branches. A moment's delay need not disturb the poise of your Paradise.

Kach. Now that I am leaving them, these old familiar friends of the forest seem newly endowed with an enchantment. It is as though to tighten their hold on a withdrawing presence that they are gripping my heart with a passionate eagerness in a final entreaty and a beauty never seen before. I bow to thee, Lord of the Forest, thou giver of shelter to the weary ! Many a wayfarer will sit again under this shade of yours in days to come, and many a scholar on many a day will take his seat on the grass as I had done and mingle his chant with the humming of the bees ; and when at day-break the boys of the hermitage will come after bath to hang their garments of bark on your branches, and at noon the cowherd boys come here to play—let your memory place me too in their midst as a companion of old.

Debjani. And think too of our sacred asrama cow, nor ever forget her in pride of your heavenly drink.

Kach. Ah, even more blessed than that drink is the ambrosial milk of our cow, calm and motherlike, bright and bountiful. I have tended her with devotion, regardless of hunger, thirst or fatigue. I have strayed with her, for whole long days, along the deep wooded banks of this river and have watched her as she rested on yon endless stretch of grass, slowly chewing the cud in a complacent repose, and

now and again lifting her large, calm eyes, full of loving gratefulness, towards me, as though to caress me. That quiet gaze, that smooth shining body, will ever remain in my thoughts hereafter.

Debjani. And do not forget our Benumati, swiftly flowing and ever singing.

Kach. I shall ever remember her, the dear companion of my exile, who, like a busy village maiden, never ceases to sing on her errand of ceaseless service.

Debjani. Alas, friend, there was one other companion of yours, whose care night and day it was to make you forget an exile's lot. Alas, for her care !

Kach. Her name is woven with the rest of my life.

Debjani. I recall the day when you first arrived and stood there in that bower—a bright Brahmin boy, of winning youthfulness, with sandal paste on your forehead, a flower chain on your breast and your countenance radiant with smile—

Kach. And I saw you gathering flowers for your morning worship, clad in white, matching the dawn in brightness. And I said, "Toil is not for such as you. Let the privilege of serving you be mine !"

Debjani. I asked in surprise who you were, and you answered gently that you were the son of Brihaspati and had come to beg from my father the permission to sit and learn at his feet.

Kach. I was fearful lest the great teacher of the Titans should refuse to accept a Brahmin from the realm of the gods.

Debjani. And so I went to him and smiling spoke : "Father, I beg a favour at your feet." He seated me by his side and lovingly placed his hand on my head and said in tender tones : "Nothing shall be denied you." I said : "The son of Brihaspati is come to your door. Accept him as your pupil." Years have passed since, and yet it seems it was only the other morn.

Kach. Thrice did the jealous Titans slay me, and thrice did you recover my life for me. That's cause enough for gratitude undying.

Debjani. Gratitude ! Forget all—and I shall not grieve. Let the benefits I did be valued as dust ! I want not service back. But does nothing else, no vanished days of passionate ferment trouble your mind ? If perchance some remnant of the delight that filled your soul during those tense hours transported from your studies in the gathering twilight on the banks of this Benumati, suddenly touches your heart with its redolence like a solicitation from a distant flower—let that

abide in your memory, and not gratitude ! If ever your attention was startled away from your toil at some one's song, or the flutter of a passing garment—then remember that when at leisure in your Paradise ! Ah ! there were days in August when deep dark clouds hung in clusters all around, and ceaseless torrents poured from above, and the heart felt oppressed with the pent-up longing of an idle day. And then came the wonder of Spring when Life seemed to rock to the rhythm of its impulse ! In these very woods, how many dawns, and dark nights, entranced with the magic of some vague fragrance, have mated and mingled with your moods of melancholy or of joy ! And in all this brooding past, was there no such day-break, or dayfall, no ecstatic night, no riot of the heart, no vision of a face, that would for ever be living in your life ! Only gratitude !—superseding all beauty, all love !

Kach. Memories that beat in every throb of one's blood are beyond the power of expression.

Debjani. Yes, I know. By the light of my own love I have glimpsed through the secret longing of your heart, and that makes me bold to claim you in defiance of all reserve. Be here with me and do not go. Happiness is not in pride of fame. Here on the banks of this Benumati we two will create a Paradise of our own and blend our beings in the lonely grandeur of love's forgetfulness.

Kach. No, no, Debjani.

Debjani. How "No" ? False is your denial ! Love's insight is divine and it has laid bare to me the secret of your mind. Though a flower be lost in foliage, its hints float in the air. Day after day, each movement of your head and of your eyes has betrayed the thrill that my voice has sent through your being, even as a diamond betrays its dazzle at each turn. Have I not noticed it all ? I have known you, and therefore claim you as mine for ever. The very King of the gods shall not sever this bond.

Kach. Was it for this, Debjani, that I toiled away for a thousand years, an exile in a hostile land ?

Debjani. Why not ? Have men borne hardships for naught else but knowledge ? Has no woman's love ever provoked sacrifice ? Alas, is knowledge alone precious, and love to be had for the asking ? You yourself never knew what you really strove after all this thousand years,—now coveting knowledge, now pursuing me. You have carried in secret this conflict of loves. Today when both are at hand, choose your own. And if courage comes to you easy and you declare, "Happiness is not in knowledge, nor in glory,—in you alone, Debjani, do I feel

my fulfilment ! Be you mine !"—no shame need cling to you. A woman's heart is worth the toil of a thousand years.

Kach. I had sworn to the gods that I would return to them with this knowledge of Deathless Life. That vow I have never forgotten, nor shall any desire or interest of my own come in the way of its fulfilment.

Debjanī. Shame on your falsehood ! Is it true you had eyes for nothing else but your books ?—that you never neglected lessons to gather flowers for a simple girl ? What made you fetch water for me while I tended my flower-beds or forsake your studies to pet my little deer ? And why would you sit on the grass beside me and sing songs you had learnt in Paradise, while darkness hung over the hushed river banks, like eyelids drooping on languorous eyes ? If knowledge it was you were after, why need you have ensnared my heart in the coils of these heavenly arts ? Or was it all a planned intrigue to win access to my father's favour ?—and success achieved, you throw this sop of gratitude in my lap as self-seeking courtiers fling miserable coins to door-keepers ?

Kach. What profit were there, proud woman, in knowing the truth ? I have practised no deception. But if I did wrong in serving you with the devotion stolen from my duty, I have been amply punished for it. I meant not to refer to it, for what does it avail to proclaim what concerns only you and me in all these three worlds ? And what shall it avail me to argue and prove my love when my appointed task bids me back to Paradise ?—though that Paradise shall never more be Paradise to me but a vast emptiness where my heart, like a wounded deer, will be buried alive in the arid sands of mere achievement ! Nevertheless, I must go, for I may not think of my own happiness before I have rendered to the gods the knowledge I owe them. Therefore, Debjani, forgive me.

Debjanī. Forgive ! What forgiveness, O Brahmin, is left in this woman's heart which you have flamed to the fury of a thunder-bolt ? You will go back to your life of celestial Bliss, where all regret will be lost in the fulness of your success. But what is left here to me ? What end to be achieved, what vow to be redeemed, can instil a meaning or pride in this thwarted and barren life of mine ? In these woods must I drag on the humiliation of a forlorn and aimless existence, where memory with its thousand thorns will prick me at each turn, and a secret shame sting the very core of my being. Shame be yours, O heartless wanderer, who came and sat through the sunny hours in the

shade of my life's garden, and, to while away time, plucked all its flowers and wove them into a garland, and at parting snapped the thread and let all the glory of a woman's heart be desecrated to dust ! Be this my curse on you : That knowledge for whose sake you have spurned me may never be fulfilled in your life. You will only bear its burden, never enjoy its use,—you will teach it but shall never be able to practise it !

Kach. And this be my blessing on you : May all your sufferings be lost in their own greatness !



MORE POSTHUMOUS POEMS OF RANALD NEWSON*

(i)

Many hours of day I spend
Among green trees and meadows ; many hours
of moonlit night—
A shadow in the blue-grey World of dreams.
But this is not enough. The clock of Time
Is rusted: The great Earth's its pendulum.
Creeps tortoise-slow the minute hand.
I listen for the hour to strike. I hear
Drip ! Drip !
My heart is dripping blood.

(ii)

"Yes," said the Spirit,
As he took off his grave clothes ;
"It was like a dream."

Others gathered about him.
"What is it like ?" they cried—
"The hills and seas and the fair green trees ?"
"It is like a dream," he said.

He bit his nails as though he starved.
He shuddered as the cold wind blew. His brow
Was all one frown. He stared from face to face.
"It was like an evil dream," he said.

* See Visva-Bharati Quarterly, Vol. II, Part III.

WHAT CAN CHRISTIANS LEARN FROM BUDDHISM ?

Prof. James B. Pratt

IN moral teaching Christianity and Buddhism are so much alike that it is not easy to contrast them or to claim for either any important ethical superiority over the other. They were founded by, perhaps, the two loftiest souls that have ever inhabited human bodies. They both teach love for all men, including one's enemies. But they have certain differences in point of view, and it is in relation to these that it might be possible for each to learn from the other.

One of the most notable things about Buddhism is its freedom from authority and its steady appeal to reason and the facts of human experience. Gotama, the Founder, was characterized by a most extraordinary combination of a soft and warm heart and a hard and cool head. No one, so far as we can tell, was ever more filled than he with pity for suffering, with sympathy for every form of sentient life. But there was no soft sentimentalism about this. And his thinking was as clear, objective, scientific as his feeling was warm and tender.

As a result of this intellectual attitude his teaching differed from that of every other religious Founder, Prophet, and Saint, in that it made no appeal to authority of God, Scripture, or Past, or to anything else but reason and the facts of human experience. One great exception to this there was, namely, his teaching of transmigration and Karma, which he took over from the common opinions of his time. Except for this and a few unimportant details, one may say that reason and experimentally verifiable facts were for him the only authorities. The great Hebrew Prophets based their pronouncements on the Word of Yahve ; Zarathustra appealed to the commands of Ahura Mazda ; Confucius appealed to the Ancients ; Mohammed, and also Jesus, made use of the authority of the Old Testament and the fresh intuition of the divine Will. The Buddha laid no more stress on the divine Will than he did upon the authority of the Veda or the traditions of his land. To his followers he laid down the rule: "Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge unto yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast the Truth as a lamp. Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves."¹ "Accept not what you hear by report,

1. Digha xvi, 26.

accept not tradition ; do not hastily conclude that 'it must be so'. Do not accept a statement on the ground that it is found in our books, nor on the supposition that 'this is acceptable', nor because it is in accord with your belief, nor because it is the saying of your teacher."¹

It cannot be said that this purely rationalistic attitude has been consistently maintained by all the Buddha's followers, or that the Buddhist monks and thinkers of today make no appeal to authority. But such appeal is at a minimum in Buddhism, and, compared with what one finds in other religions, it always has been. It is important also to note that while Buddhism appeals to facts as well as to reason, the facts to which it appeals are mostly of a general rather than a particular sort, most of them lying within the realms of psychology and of what might be called common human knowledge. Buddhism, like Hinduism, the other great Indian religion, is profoundly indifferent to history. What happened at particular times and to particular persons is not, in its opinion, relevant to the universal nature of man and to the good life which alone is of importance. The traditional events of the Buddha's life are interesting and may be edifying, as illustrations of general principles, but as historical facts they play no part in the theory of Buddhism. Should a good Buddhist become convinced that such a man as Gotama the Buddha never lived and that all the stories about him are pure fiction, it would, in theory at least, make no difference to him. The eternal facts of human nature, of sorrow, sin, and escape, would remain exactly what Buddhism has always taught them to be. The contrast which this presents to the orthodox Christian view of the importance of the historical is, of course, very striking. Hinayana Buddhism is interested almost exclusively in morality (in the large sense), and the Mahayana adds to that an interest in Metaphysics. Neither moral nor metaphysical beliefs have any very close or obvious relation to particular facts.

As a result of this rationalistic and non-authoritarian outlook, and of this lack of dependence upon the historical and the particular, Buddhism is able to take an attitude of almost supercilious indifference to many of the questions that are always worrying liberal Christian and Jewish scholars, and which would worry liberal Moslems if there were any Moslems liberal enough to worry.² Consider the doubts and

1. Anguttara III, 65.

2. We do not endorse the scepticism of the author regarding liberal Moslems. There have been, and are, many daring mystics and thinkers among the Moslems, as liberal as any among the Christians or Hindus.—Editor.

questionings, the troubled consciences, the wretched Robert Elsmere, the heresy hunting, the Scopes trials, that have troubled American Christendom these last fifty or seventy-five years, and trace them back to the questions from which they rose : Are the Scriptures literally inspired ? Are we in possession of the Gospels in their original form ? How explain the divergencies in the accounts of the life of Christ ? Is the description of the Creation in the Book of Genesis to be taken literally ? How far shall we go with Darwin ? Shall we believe in the New Testament miracles ? Were any of the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled ? What should we do if science should succeed in producing living protoplasm in a laboratory ?, etc., etc. To those familiar with religious conditions in England and America, I need not depict the heart-burning, the anxiety, the despair, and the righteous anger which questions like these have sprinkled all along the path of Christianity during the last century. The Buddhist looks on at all this worry over petty particular facts, and murmurs, with a certain complacency, "What fools these Christians be !"

I wonder if there be not something here that Christians might well learn from Buddhists. Are they not a little like Martha—"troubled over many things"; and in this respect have not their Buddhist brothers "chosen the better part" ? Is the essential treasure of Christianity laid up in such insecure places as to be at the mercy of Higher Critics and Darwinians and Emergent Evolutionists who at any moment may break through and steal ? And would they not do better to fix their hearts, as the Buddhists have fixed theirs, on eternal things, and so be able to look with an indifferent smile at all the discoveries that History and Criticism and Physics and Chemistry can make ? So might Christians turn toward the future with the calm confidence and the imperturbable peace which one sees in the face of the Buddha.

Related to this contrast of attitude toward particular facts is another contrast for which I find it hard to invent a suitable name, but which perhaps I can make you feel with me. It is, I suppose, a difference in the range or sweep of the imagination. Magnificent as is the Hebrew conception of the righteous Yahve, beautiful as is Old Testament religious poetry, its picture of the cosmos—from which grew the Orthodox Christian *Weltanschauung*—is notably limited, circumscribed, at times almost petty. The Buddhist world conception, on the other hand, delights in the thought of enormous expansions of space and spans of time. According to Mahayana teaching, there has been

a succession of Buddhas, each of whom follows his predecessor at an interval of several thousand years. No man knoweth the number of the Buddhas, but in the *Sukhavati Vyūha* reference is made to eighty-one hundred thousand *niyutas* of *Kotis* of them. A *niyuta* is a million and a *koti* ten million ; and if you will multiply several thousand by eighty-one hundred thousand, and that by a million, and that by ten million, you will reach a number which the English language does not aspire to name, and a conception of the cosmic past which even Western Geology and Astronomy would respect. It was to thinkers with conceptions such as these that Christian missionaries not so long ago were carrying the news that the world was created in the year 4004 B.C.

Liberal Christianity has of course outgrown the pettiness of Arch-deacon Usher's chronology, and no longer takes literally the story of creation in Genesis. But it is still true, I think, that a good deal of the Christian doctrine which calls itself orthodox retains a personalistic and limited conception of God which is in marked contrast to the largeness of the Mahayana thought. Jehova is still busy designing means by which He may eventually accomplish the triumph of His church. He is doing His best and can make excellent use of our help. Possibly we need some such conception as this to add urgency to our moral efforts. But it is with a sense of distinct relief, with the feeling of going out from a nice little room into the starlight, that one turns from this neat Christian picture to the immensities and eternities of the Mahayana, from the little good God to the Buddha nature that is in all things.

It is natural and perhaps inevitable that the more rationalistic and less authoritative attitude of Buddhism to which I referred in an earlier paragraph should carry with it a larger tolerance and a more persistent elasticity than Christianity or any other non-Indian religion possesses. The chief source of dogmatism is, I suppose, belief in authority. The man who places all he has before the judgment seat of reason, may, indeed, be intolerant—or, more exactly, contemptuous—in manner ; but he cannot be dogmatic. For dogmatism is just the insistence upon dominating another man's thought without submitting to the common rule of reason. Buddhism has many sins of omission and commission, but dogmatism is not one of them. This lack of dogmatism and this single loyalty to reason rather than to any of its particular formulations, has had much to do in making it, with Hinduism, one of the two most broadly tolerant of religions. Since it

is not in love with particular traditional formulations of the truth, it is willing to see—and able to see—in formulations other than its own a fundamental truth common to both. This essential tolerance has in its turn begotten a power of adaptation to new proposals, new ways of viewing things, new situations and new problems. Such new situations face a religion with changes in either time or space. By these I mean, changes in belief and feeling and environment that come about in the passage of time within any given country ; and the changes that face a missionary religion when it invades a new land. Both kinds of change have been met, and are continually being met, by Buddhism with an unusual degree of youthful elasticity. We have already seen how it can easily adapt itself to changes in historical and scientific opinion, and so be much less troubled than Christianity or Judaism or Islam with the progress of modern thought. Its elasticity in adapting itself to the situations which it finds in lands strange to it is no less striking. And this, as I have said, is bound up with its lack of dogmatism and its essential tolerance.

The contrast here between the typical attitude of old-fashioned orthodox Christianity and that of Buddhism is particularly striking. Your typical Christian missionary of the old school arrives in the heathen land of his choice and looks about him with a shudder. What awful beliefs and practices are these ! Beliefs so different from the inspired beliefs of the Bible, and practices so different from those which go on in God's own country ! And since so different from the Christian, the beliefs must be false and the practices must be wicked. Probably the missionary will conclude that none of the philosophies and customs of the heathens are worth study, and will therefore make up his mind not to know anything among them save Christ and Him crucified ; or perhaps he will try to learn something of the heathen doctrines with the one purpose of refuting them. A missionary I met in Korea said to me he wished he might find time to study Buddhism in order to understand more fully the many falsehoods and evil practices inculcated by that wicked religion. I am glad to say that there are many Christian missionaries nowadays who have learned to take a very different attitude toward the non-Christian religions ; but I do not think I have exaggerated the intolerance of many an old-school missionary—and I fear that a good many of the youngest missionaries of today belong to the oldest of the schools.

Arriving in the foreign field with such presuppositions as this, your old-school missionary starts his campaign not in the way of

St. Paul, who, you recall, began his address to the Athenians by tactfully saying that he perceived they were very religious ; but by asserting that his hearers have no religion, or if they have one it is worse than none at all ; that all the gods they worship are non-existent, or, more likely, are a pack of devils ; that their sacred books are full of deception, and that they must first of all give up pretty much every one of their old beliefs and of their ancient and revered ceremonies and thus purify their minds and hearts for the reception of the only true doctrine. I exaggerate, but something like this negative and destructive method has not uncommonly been the missionary plan of campaign. An English missionary to the Moslems, whom I once met in Benares, told me that he always began his attempts at converting these fervent believers in the Unity of God by preaching to them the doctrine of the Trinity.

The missionaries of Buddhism have regularly taken a very different course. When the Hinayana arrived in the southern lands, its emissaries found the inhabitants worshipping various animistic deities and some of the Hindu gods. No attack upon these was made, no suggestion that they were either unreal or wicked. For the most part they were simply ignored as having really nothing to do, one way or another, with the great business of living wisely and nobly. The *nats* and *devas* went about their business as of old, and the monks went about theirs. Even when the lay converts began to bring their little gods with them into the Buddhist cycle, no objection was made. So long as the Buddha and his teaching and his mode of life were dominant, nothing need be feared from a little superstition about tree-spirits. The same general principles were followed when the Mahayana invaded China. The missionaries found the land in possession of the many native Chinese gods, and the many Taoist gods and heroes. They found it also largely obedient to the moral teachings of Confucius. With none of these forces, human or supernatural, did the missionaries quarrel. They came not to destroy but to fulfill. So far as I know they never suggested that the Chinese gods were unreal or the Confucian teaching mistaken. In fact, they seem to have carried on very little, if any, street preaching. They busied themselves translating their Buddhist books into Chinese, and worshipping the Buddha in the proper way and keeping his commandments. The principal Chinese and Taoist deities were recognized as probably real ; some were even given places in Buddhist temples. The Mahayana scheme of things is so large that it has room for endless supernatural beings,

and no Buddhist would pretend to have enumerated them all. Doubtless there are many *niyutas* of *kotis* of spiritual beings which no Buddhist has ever known nor named. Why, therefore, should not these spirits that the Chinese believe in be among them ? They are all subject to the Law of the Blessed One, and the Buddha nature is doubtless in them as in everything else. To admit them to subordinate positions in the Buddhist temples was thus only a symbolic way of stressing the fact that all Truth is one ; that the various religions are only diverse ways of pointing to the same ultimate Reality: that the Buddha expresses Himself in an infinite variety of forms: that the Buddha nature is in all things.

When Chinese Buddhists carried the teachings of their Master into Japan, the same friendly attitude toward the religion which they found was again adopted. Shinto was the one religion of Japan at the time, and the many *Kami* (gods), with Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, at their head, were universally worshipped. Far from attacking this rather child-like faith, the missionaries simply embraced all of it within their larger conception. The *Kami* were adopted as parts of the Buddhist cycle, and by a happy combination of clever statecraft and sincere philosophical broadmindedness, Amaterasu was identified with the Buddha Vairocana.

The results of this liberal view of other faiths, this method of stressing the positive rather than the negative, the unitive rather than the diversive elements in a total religious situation, have been mixed. In the first place it avoided religious strife and petty bickerings, and gave to the popular mind an impressive object lesson of the largeness and inclusiveness of religion. Furthermore, it of course facilitated greatly the spread of the new religion in the missionary lands. Especially the rapid conversion of Japan to Buddhism was due in large measure to the hospitable attitude which the leaders of Buddhism took toward Shinto, the way in which they made it possible and even natural to be a good follower of both religions at the same time, the widely disseminated view that Buddhism was only a new and higher truth, not inconsistent with, but supplementary to, the truth which the Japanese already possessed.

I am not sure, however, that the results of this very broadminded method have been *all* to the good. Doubtless it hastened the spread of Buddhism in both China and Japan, but it did this only at the cost of watering down some of its distinctive superiority. Compromise with less lofty religions meant the production of a mixture which was

something like an average, and which lowered the level of Buddhist thought, in much the same measure by which it raised the level of Taoism and Shinto. The hospitable welcome of the many Taoist divinities into the Buddhist temples of China has often resulted in the guests receiving the major portion of the incense. And in Japan the merging of the native with the missionary religion into what was known as Ryobu Shinto, though for several centuries it added to the number of semi-Buddhists, produced at length a fervent revulsion against everything Buddhist on the part of the nationally-minded Japanese, from which Buddhism is still suffering.

The tolerance of Buddhism toward other religions is thus something from which Christians might learn more lessons than one. There is such a thing as carrying broadmindedness so far that little really distinctive is left. Every important truth involves not only a positive assertion but also a potentially negative one. If it be true that there is a God, then atheism is *not* true : If clear thinking is desirable then muddiness and mushiness of thought is not desirable. He who sentimentally, or good-naturedly, says : "Yes ! Yes !" to everything, in effect says neither Yes nor No, and might as well keep his mouth shut. Much as I prize liberality of thought I am not among those who would say that all religions are equally true or equally good. The man who says all religions are equally true would probably express his real meaning more exactly should he say : All religions are equally false. If one's religion is really to amount to something for the world or for oneself, one must believe it deeply and enthusiastically ; and if one does, there will be a number of views that one will deeply believe to be mistaken and very wrong. Both Christianity and Buddhism have certain characteristic excellencies which they would be in grave danger of losing should they step down from their lofty plane to the lower level of the more primitive religions. The Vaishnavas of India, I am told, would open their arms wide to receive Christianity and would gladly recognize Christ as one of the incarnations of Vishnu,—along side with Krishna and Rama, and with the lion incarnation and the boar and all the six or eight or hundred others. The invitation is prompted by a real liberalism of thought ; but the Christians of India have done well not to accept it.

On the other hand, it is still true that there is much that is genuinely admirable in the broad tolerance of Buddhism, and much that is worthy of emulation. From the merely practical point of view, the Buddhist missionary method, of recognizing all that is good in

other religions, of magnifying the points of agreement and not exaggerating the points of divergence, is far more efficient than the traditional Christian method of emphasizing differences, attacking and insulting non-Christian views, declaring war instead of making friendships. The essentially illiberal and narrowminded attitude of so many Christian missionaries of the old school may have had something to do with the limitation of their success, in India and China, very largely to the less intelligent classes.

And aside from the practical question of methodological efficiency, the large and philosophical attitude of Buddhism toward other religions, when not carried so far as to obliterate real and significant differences, is in itself admirable and worthy of imitation by us Christians. While the three or four great historical religions of the world are superior to the many primitive and animistic faiths that still survive, and while Buddhism and Christianity and Hinduism each possesses its peculiar genius, it still is true that the great religions have much more in common than in contrast, that the essential part of the faith of each is very near that of the other, and that each of them should find its real foe not in one of the other religions but in a selfish Materialism, the common enemy of every spiritual movement. The great religions should view each other not as rivals, but as fellows, together fighting the good fight, shoulder to shoulder. To some extent this desirable point of view is being attained in our day ; but the leaders in this great advance have not been found till very lately among the Christians, but among Buddhists and Hindus.

As compared with other religions Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity are notable for adaptability and elasticity,—Christianity rather less so than the two Indian religions. There is another trait of undoubted excellence which Christianity shares with Buddhism, but in which, again, it is rather outshone by its colleague. It is impossible to find just the term for this characteristic, but perhaps I can suggest it by the word *inwardness*. The highest values of life Buddhism finds in that inward blessedness, that spiritual freedom, that imperturbability and high confidence, which no external conditions can confer or take away, and which is to be realized only within the heart. The sole significant conflicts for Buddhism are the inner ones. "All that we are", says the *Dhammapada*, "is the result of what we have thought : it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts." "Let us live happily", urges the same great book, "though we call nothing our own ! We shall be like the bright gods, feeding on happiness." "If

one man conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors." The aim of the moral life, and the means for its achievement, are both to be looked for within. While Buddhist ethics has much in common with utilitarianism, it is in this respect in agreement with Kant. There is for it nothing else so good as the good will. And on the training of the will the Buddhist spends his chief effort. The Noble Eightfold Path is largely a way of disciplining the self, of perfecting the essential character. Its seventh stage, "right-mindfulness", points to the necessity of knowing what we are about and considering the bearing of all our acts upon our inner nature. The last stage—the climax of the whole training—consists in systematic meditations, so directed as to overcome one's most glaring faults and stimulate that purity of mind and that earnest good will toward all sentient life which are so central in the Buddhist ideal. It was the Buddha himself who first practised and inculcated this method. Often he would spend hours alone in the forest, "causing", as he said, "the power of benevolence which fills my mind to extend over one quarter of the world, in the same way over the second quarter, over the third, over the fourth, above, below, across, on all sides, in all directions. Over the entire universe I send forth the power of benevolence which fills my spirit ; the wide, the great, the immeasurable feeling which knows naught of hate, which doeth no evil." This type of meditation has been commonly practised by his followers ever since,—an active cultivation of the spirit of good will for all kinds and conditions of men and of animals and of whatever other sentient creatures may be.

I wonder if we have not here something which Christians might well consider seriously, and perhaps carefully emulate. I feel the more convinced that this is so because I can so easily imagine many an efficient and very modern apostle of the Social Gospel and the Community Church, ridiculing this oriental emphasis upon meditation. "To sit for hours and send out his good will to all the points of the compass !"—such an one will doubtless comment. "What's the use of such waste of time ?" Why not get out, instead, and *do* something for somebody ?"

Efficiency in the service of others is very valuable. But the ultimate sources of such service, if it is to be more than prudent egoism, must be found at last in the good-will of the heart. "Out of the heart are the issues of life", as both the Buddha and the Old Testament were aware ; when the heart runs dry, the soup-kitchens are

likely to do the same. There is no small danger that our western movements for efficient service and social morality may become shallow and materialistic. Shallow, if they leave out of consideration the highest good—the inner development of the individuals who make up society ; materialistic, if they stress the external conditions of life, its comforts and possessions, rather than the ethical aspect of the will and the nourishment and discipline of the heart.

But while in their stress upon inwardness all schools of Buddhism are in notable contrast to the western extreme and busy disciples of social efficiency, there is something in common between the monks of the Hinayana and many of these modern Christians,—namely, the essentially and exclusively humanistic point of view which they share. So far as our actual records tell us, the Buddha allowed into his system nothing that in any real respect corresponds to what Christianity and Judaism and Islam understand by the word God. It would, perhaps, be a misuse of terms to call his teaching atheistic, but if he did not attack the notion of deity, he is pictured in the *Nikayas* as being indifferent to it, and he did explicitly warn his disciples against having anything to do with metaphysical or cosmic problems. He had doubtless felt the uselessness of such purely academic discussion, and he was determined that his disciples should concentrate all their attention and effort and thought upon the great problem of the best and wisest way of conducting human life.

The consequences of this effort to delete the cosmic from religion are interesting. In the first place it must be said that the Buddha was not able to remove the cosmic entirely from his doctrine, for he realized that the question of the moral nature of the universe had a direct bearing upon the moral life of man. Though there was in his teaching no God, the place of God was to a large extent taken by the Law of Karma, the fundamental Justice that rules all things—for the Buddha's godless Universe is supernaturally just. The monastic followers of the Buddha, for three or more centuries, observed his veto upon metaphysics with rather surprising care ; and the Hinayana monks have followed in their footsteps ever since. The same cannot be said of the laymen. In all the lands of Southern Buddhism the seemingly native longing of the human heart not only for goodness but for *worship* has found its vent ; the laymen of the Hinayana lands have demanded and found a personal deity. The admission of the native gods of the mission lands into the Buddhist cycle, to which I have referred, was in part due to the fact that Buddhism itself offered at

first no object of worship. But there is a centre of adoration in all these lands today much more popular and compelling than these native deities. And there is a certain historical irony in the fact that the great teacher who founded the world's great atheistic religion should himself, in all the lands where his original teaching survives, have been turned into a God.

But if the Hinayana has been unable to resist the human demand for worship, the same is true of the Mahayana to an immensely greater extent. Four or five hundred years after the death of the Founder many Buddhist thinkers found the Indian racial interest in metaphysics too strong for them, and in spite of the Buddha's stress upon the importance of those things which he had elucidated, and the evil consequences of discussing those things which he had not elucidated, they began to build up a conception of the universe as magnificent in its speculation as any system of philosophy you will find anywhere, whether East or West. This new thought of the Mahayana school reinterpreted the world in idealistic terms, and eventually conceived of an Absolute and All-inclusive Being which it identified with whom but the Buddha himself? The probable prospects of an attempt to develop and hand on a purely humanistic religion may receive some light from this large movement within Oriental thought and experience: one of the greatest of all religious teachers founding a religion that recognizes no God; the laymen of one of its branches making a God of the Founder himself; in the other branch, both laymen and monks uniting to make the Founder into the divine and all-inclusive Absolute. Is it possible that from this large fact of Buddhist history Christians may learn something of importance?

The matters we have just discussed lead naturally into the problem of worship—one of the most pressing problems of the protestant Christian Church today, and one upon which the experience of Buddhism might throw some light. Worship began with primitive man as an attempt to produce an effect upon the supernatural powers by which he felt himself surrounded. As definite gods developed and a systematic polytheism was formulated, elaborate means of pleasing the gods were devised; and the care of this important part of the communal life was delegated to certain specially consecrated and educated persons. After many milleniums it began to dawn upon the more observant that participation in the cult, and the saying of prayers,—whether spontaneous or formal—produced upon the worshippers certain good effects, such as peace, courage, hope, faith, confidence. Eventually

this fact came to be consciously recognized by many of the worshippers, and so it came about that those who had the direction of the cult, more or less deliberately planned it with these subjective effects in mind. Worship the aim of which is chiefly to be found in such desirable effects upon the worshippers I shall call "subjective worship", in contrast to "objective worship", by which I would indicate the more primitive and less sophisticated sort, the aim of which is to produce an objective effect upon the deity, or upon the relation between the deity and his worshippers. Now one of the most central problems of the Christian Church today might be expressed in terms of these two types of worship. As the older theology is being cast aside, the tendency of the times is a rapid turning away from the objective worship of our fathers to a self-conscious use of the church service solely as a means of producing certain desirable psychical effects upon the audience. The change is so rapid and so striking, that those who have the future of Christian worship and the Christian religion at heart must consider seriously the question whither the present tendency is leading and what is the value and the necessity of this change from the objective to the subjective. If Buddhism has any light to throw on these questions we should all have it.

No religion has gone farther in this experiment with subjective worship than Buddhism. The Founder rigidly excluded cult and prayer from the new spiritual movement which he started, regarding both of them as superstitious and as inconsistent with his largely humanistic and non-metaphysical method of self-culture. For many centuries after his death his followers were fairly faithful to his precepts ; but were no more able to keep themselves entirely free from cult than from belief in some kind of supernatural power that might be influenced by prayer and praise. A simple custom of chanting some of the traditional sayings of the Founder, in front of his image, soon grew up among the monks ; and practices much more like the worship of other religions were brought into Buddhism by the laymen. Nonetheless it must be said that many of the monks of the Southern lands, and some of the more learned laymen, use the ceremonies of their temples in a way to carry "subjective worship" as far as it has perhaps ever been carried. In strict Hinayana theory the Buddha has departed into Nirvana and can in no possible way be reached or influenced by any prayers or praises we can make. The only possible value of any form of worship is, therefore, (in strict theory, once more) to nourish the Buddhist virtues and induce the Great Peace in the minds of the

worshippers. Buddhist scriptures are sometimes quite frank about this. A Burmese religious book says: "It is bootless to worship the Buddha ; nothing is necessary but to revere Him and His memory. For as the farmer sows the seed and gathers in the grain in due season, so will the man who trusts in the Buddha and holds fast by his sacred Law obtain deliverance and pass into Nehban. The earth and the Buddha are alike in themselves inert." A monk in Rangoon said to me, "Prayer and offering are not received by the Buddha in the sense that they have any effect upon Him, nor in the sense of being means of procuring anything from Him. Their value is subjective purely. A prayer for peace or purity is likely to bring about its own fulfilment, especially if accompanied by the thought of the Buddha as our ideal. The Buddha, indeed, is for practical purposes quite dead, but He is the ideal of what human life might be and of what each of us ought to be. Thus for the enlightened Buddhist prayer is not supplication but mental discipline." If one asks why the enlightened Buddhist still goes through the ancient ceremonies and repeats the ancient verses, the answer is that those traditional forms help to produce the desired mind-state. The Buddhist is instructed to "offer flowers just as if the Buddha were present in person" ; to "seek absolution for his faults just as if the sacred things (before which he worships) had life." The Buddhist philosophy of worship is, thus, a kind of "*Philosophie des Als Ob*"—a "philosophy of *as if*."

Just how much value this subjective worship has for the sophisticated monks and laymen who practise it, no outsider will ever fully know. 'There can be little doubt, I should say, that to some of them it has genuine value. I doubt if it is irreplaceable. Sophisticated individuals who deliberately and self-consciously make use of religious forms in order to influence their own moods and morals and for no other reason, have pretty obviously attained a level of moral purpose and mental discipline on which the repetition of the ancient methods will have no very great influence. Having reached the sophisticated plane, they have already won their battle. Other psychological methods instead of the religious might be just as serviceable. They would not greatly miss their subjective worship.

An analysis of the value of worship in general may throw a little additional light on the problem. In a large way we may say that the value of worship to the individual is two-fold: it strengthens his faith in the cosmic teachings of his religion and brings him a sense of community with his fellows and of communion with the More-than-human ;

and secondly it nourishes his ideals and strengthens him in his moral struggle. How far does the subjective worship of Hinayana Buddhism contribute to these values ? It is impossible to answer with exactness, but certain conclusions of a general sort would seem probable. In the first place this Hinayana worship can hardly add anything to the strength of the faith in various cosmic matters, because the Hinayana discourages nearly all questions that deal with cosmic matters. The value that the subjective worship generates would therefore seem to be confined to the moral sphere—the “mental discipline”, the “peace and purity” to which my Rangoon monk referred. One can see how educated Buddhists who for years have cultivated that inwardness so characteristic of Buddhism might find assistance in these matters from the custom of regular and systematic repetition of certain traditionally sacred words and acts. But how such repetitions, once shorn of all belief in their objective efficacy, could greatly aid the rank and file of Buddhist laymen, it is difficult to see. It would thus appear probable that the subjective worship of the Hinayana assists only those who least need assistance, and does little or nothing for the man whose “mental discipline” is but slightly developed and who therefore looks to religion and worship for the reinforcement which moral effort alone is unable to give. It is in part for this reason, I suspect, that the less sophisticated Buddhists have either brought foreign supernatural beings into the Buddhist cycle, or have made the Buddha himself into a kind of God. In doing so they have, of course, retained a largely objective element in their worship. The whole tendency of the Mahayana confirms this conclusion: for all over the Mahayana world the conviction is widespread that worship actually and objectively puts one into closer touch with the Buddha nature, which is in all things. Taking the Buddhist world in its entirety it seems to be true of it, as it is of Christendom, that the desired subjective effects of worship vary directly with the strength of the belief in the objective nature of worship. Destroy objective worship completely—publish it widely that nothing happens in prayer except the production of certain feelings or resolves within the individual mind—and you make the production of those very subjective effects almost impossible, unless it be for the few who need little assistance from any forms of worship at all.

There remains one more problem which I should like to present before I close this essay ; a problem which very likely does not belong here at all, for I doubt greatly whether it be a matter on which Christians can learn anything from Buddhism ; yet closely related to the

whole course of our thought, since it is a question of vital import to both Buddhism and Christianity, on the answer to which their whole future very largely depends. The matter presents itself to me in some such fashion as the following.

It would be pretty generally acknowledged that the two men who in both their teaching and their example have supremely stood for brotherly love toward all men, for peace and helpfulness and universal good will, are the Buddha and the Christ. More than any other religions, the two that they founded have taught unselfish devotion, the breaking down of enmities through the cultivation of love for enemies, the domination of life by good will and reason. "Hatred", the Buddha taught, "does not cease by hatred at any time ; hatred ceases by love. This is an old rule." ¹ "Victory breeds hatred, for the conquered is unhappy. He who has given up both victory and defeat, he, the contented, is happy." ² One's good will to every sentient creature should be as inexhaustible as the waters of the Ganges. The Hinayana continued this teaching of the Founder, and the Mahayana seems to have caught a double portion of his spirit. One of the best known of the early Mahayana writers voiced the Buddhist aspiration in the following words: "I would fain become a soother of all the sorrows of all creatures. May I be a balm to the sick, their healer and servitor, until sickness come never again ; may I become an unfailing store for the poor, and serve them with manifold things for their need..... I yield myself to all living things to deal with me as they list—they may smite or revile me forever, bestrew me with dust, play with my body. Let them make me do whatever works bring them pleasure ; but never may mishap befall any of them by reason of me May all who slander me or do me hurt or jeer at me gain a share of Enlightenment. I would be a protector of the unprotected, a guide of wayfarers, a ship, a dyke, and a bridge for them who seek the Further Shore : a lamp for them who need a lamp, a bed for them who need a bed, a slave for them who need a slave." ⁴

I need not remind the reader that expressions like these could be found in large numbers in the New Testament. In fact I am sure that many Christians who for the first time read these Buddhist sen-

1. Dhammapada I, 5.

2. Ibid XV, 201.

3. Majjhima XXI,

4. Santideva, Path of Light, Chap. III.

tences, are struck with what they probably half-phrase to themselves as their essentially "Christian" spirit. Their spirit is Christian, and the spirit of many of the noble sayings of the New Testament is equally Buddhist. There can be little question that these ~~to~~ great religions from their origin have stood, as no others ever have, for active helpfulness, for healing the broken-hearted, for preaching deliverance unto the captive, for the overcoming of evil with good.

We can imagine an intelligent Martian visiting our planet in the early years of these religions, observing the condition of the world, studying the teaching of Christianity and Buddhism, and concluding that if ever these two religions could be spread abroad among mankind, if the leaders and rulers of men could be converted to one or the other of them, an age of mutual helpfulness, of peace and joy, unlike anything ever known before, would surely begin. You see what I am driving at. A very large part of the world has been converted. The rulers and the ruling classes of most of the countries of the world are either Christian or Buddhist. This has been the case for well over one thousand years. The two religions would seem to have had every opportunity that power and wealth and prestige can bring. And look at the world that they have formed. See what they have made of it. Doubtless on many lines conditions have improved. But the contrast between wealth and poverty, the presence of starving penury amid abundance, the steady appeal to violence is still so painful that most of us good Christians and good Buddhists have to cultivate indifference and think of something else for the very preservation of our sanity and peace, and like the pious priest and orthodox Levite of the parable, carefully pass by on the other side. And when one looks at the international situation, the color grows even darker. When the Christian religion was born the western world was at peace, thanks to the pagan Romans. But about the time that Christianity became widespread in Europe a series of wars began that have continued ever since. Buddhist India was never very warlike ; but one will have to read widely indeed to find more bloody annals than those of Buddhist Burma, and few wars have been more terrible than those of Buddhist Siam with Buddhist Burma and with Buddhist Cambodia. Nor have matters improved in more recent and cultured ages. In this very year in which we live ¹ Christian Italy and Buddhist Japan have made unprovoked attack upon Abyssinia and China ; and the nations of Christian Europe are

1. This article was received by us in 1936.—Ed.

daily anticipating the outbreak of a war that may be more destructive and horrible than any ever waged before. And this not twenty years after the close of the "war to end war." "Victory breeds hatred, for the conquered is unhappy." "Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time : hatred ceases by love. This is an old rule." Nor can we explain matters to our comfort by saying that our religions have never really been tried. If after these two thousand years, with every advantage which wealth and power could bring to our religions, they have never really been tried, it argues that they are so far removed from human nature, so utterly impracticable, that we had better give up the hope of their ever being really worth anything of importance in this particular world.

I do not see how the implied criticism of our religions can be avoided ; but the situation can to some extent be explained. Both Buddhism and Christianity are very noble religions; both of them have done great things for the world ; but I think we must admit that neither of them is, or ever has been, perfect. Even as they issued from the hand of their founders, both were incomplete. Both of them were admirable in their treatment of the individual ; both were—and always have been—weak and rather unhelpful in their attitudes toward social, economic, and international relations. Buddhism was from the first emphatically a religion for the individual. It never sought to save the world ; its interest was in saving the individual out of the world. Christianity might have developed into a genuinely social as well as individual religion, had it not been for the unfortunate fact that during its formative years all its leaders were obsessed with the conviction that the end of the world was at hand, so that it was not worth while to do anything toward improving the structure of society. When this eschatological belief was given up, the evil had been done and Christianity has ever since borne the marks of its purely individualistic childhood. The conception of original sin, moreover, came in to discourage what efforts might have been made to reform human society on a more rational and really Christian basis. Thus, for one reason or another, the influence of Christianity with its stress upon non-violence and upon universal love, has been limited very largely to the life and conduct of the individual, and has been, to say the least, very meagre in its effects upon social and international structure.

The situation within Buddhism is not more encouraging. Most of the Buddhist world seems quite indifferent to large social and international problems; and among those followers of the Tathagata who are

genuinely interested in these matters there is much the same sort of division that one finds among Christians. Thus, in Japan, while the Shin Sect has courageously refused to worship Shinto images and thus align itself with Nationalism, and while in 1932 many Buddhists joined with Christians in anti-war meetings, one must remember the militant Nationalism of the Nichiren Sect and Ouchi's "Corporation for Adoration of the Throne and Reverence towards Buddha" and the imperialism of a large proportion of the Buddhists of Japan. I have even heard a report that last year a Buddhist federation presented the government with a bombing plane. A Japanese friend of mine—a Buddhist philosopher and scholar—writes me as follows: "Buddhism does not seem to aspire for the banishment of war. They teach loving-kindness to all creatures. They even promise the attainment by inanimate objects of final Buddhahood. But this does not seem to prevent their taking part in the work of mutual destruction."

What shall we say to these things ? I have no wisdom to offer but there are three rather obvious comments which I should like to make, in great brevity, before closing. The first is this:—that though it is certainly true, as I have just said, that social problems require direct treatment and cannot be solved by merely rousing the good will of individuals, the good will of individuals is certainly a large element, if not an absolute *sine qua non*, in any solution ; and Buddhism and Christianity, in Asia and Europe, have probably contributed in the past, and are probably contributing today, more of this individual good will than any other movement of our day or of any day. My second comment is this: that while Buddhism and Christianity have not been noted for their interest in social problems, they have been, and they still are, notable for their elasticity and their power of adapting themselves to the new needs of new ages. Already in fact they are beginning to adapt themselves to the social needs of our times. If we look back only forty years we can see a very striking change in Protestant Christianity, a great new interest in society. The rise of the Social Gospel has, indeed, been the greatest event in Christian history since the Protestant Reformation. Buddhism, though in many ways more elastic than Christianity, has been slower in its response to the new needs of our age ; but in Japan at least it is awakening to them. We need not therefore, be too despondent or hopeless as to what these two religions with their conspicuous power of adaptation, may yet do.

Finally let me point out that what Christianity and Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, will yet do for the solution of the world's most

pressing problems depends on what you and I and our fellows do. I am not hopeless about the future of religion and the world, but neither am I over-sanguine. Our world is in a very bad way, and the future is enshrouded in darkness too thick for my eyes to pierce. But in Emerson's words, "We now are men, advancing on chaos and the dark." Let us make use of all the wisdom and inspiration we can gather from the great teachings of the past. But let us not be limited or bound by those sacred teachings ; but, throwing aside every weight, let us press forward to the new day and the tremendous struggle that is before us. And as we advance against the foe, let us at least waive a gesture of good will and friendly co-operation to our fellows of every faith, who in their distant parts of the world are facing the forces of the common enemy.



INDIAN POEMS

Yone Noguchi

THE TROPICAL SEA

THE tropical sea nods in the amorous hold of the sunlight ;
The ship glides between sleeping and waking.
The dolphins, sharks and whales sometimes turn and leap,
Not in demonstration against the human trespassers.
Oft departing from rest, the sea rises high and wild
Attempting to reply to the aerial melody of the sky.
The sun sinks down in the west—
The moon climbs up the east.
We have to leave our strife and home-thought in the distance,
Trusting in God and in the compass.
The speed of the ship is fast, pacing a phantom march.
The cargo she carries is but an adventure and dream.
A passenger on the lower deck hangs a hammock in which he lies
And rocks himself along the ancient road of song.

“Steal away to the moon, my love,
Let me tell you the pain of love,
Steal away to the forest, my love,
Let me tell you the secret of love !
The sun breaks the eastern sky,—
Be it the possession of wild beasts !
Ours is the light of the moon,
Ours is the whisper of love !”

Away from the hammock, the song-bird strikes a match ;
The sparks of his cigarette swept by a breeze fall to the sea.
A pirate in search of Eldorado's hidden jewels and love,
A Columbus in search of the spot where life is song,

I feel only lonely with a big tear-drop upon my dusky breast.
How I long for a life, lonely and sad !
I lean on the railing of the deck, then I resume my steps ;
Amid shadows the tropical heat turns to whisper.
Oh, damn'd morality, be off, wisdom of old too !
Be thrown overboard the language our mothers taught us !
There is nothing sweeter than sailing toward a land that stories tell of—
A vision beckons me, calls me with the sweetest voice.
Surely I see there roses forming into a cup of lover's lips,
Surely I hear there the birds greeting the smile of dawn.
The moonlight washes the sea in a limitless golden road—
Love alone knows how to cross over dry-footed.

On Board.

A MANGO TREE

WALK on tiptoe, quietly, quietly,
Lest the tree may awake from its sleep !
I deem the tree an ascetic whose feet are deep in the earth ;
The tree surrenders to sleep akin to passion,
Its body and soul are melted into a sensual light.
Oh, may silence, while lasting, so be complete—
Silence have the tree in its voluptuous keep !
The November noonday sun stands still ;
Oh, peace, keep the breeze in security !
May the damask of shadow and light not be stirred on the ground !
Be quiet, walk on tiptoe !
The tree-ascetic sleeps. The breeze may soon break its bond,
And whisper to the tree anent the happy pain of one parting
from Sleep.

Ten minutes passed, twenty minutes passed—
 alas, the tree awoke !
What did the breeze whisper thee, Tree-ascetic ?
What mystery is there in sleep, Ascetic-tree ?
What a message of oblivion thou tellest us ?
The tree neither sighed nor spoke,
But in ascetic's fashion it only moved its unkempt hair.

Santiniketan.

FOLLOWERS OF BUDDHISM

THE followers of Buddhism in the imperishable raiment of silence sit before the inextinguishable lamp of Faith, by whose light (the light older than life and the world) they seek the road of emancipation. The house east of the forests, west of the hills, is dark without, luminous within, clothed with the symbols of the beauties of spirits and heaven,—a wonderful place where the imagination has for a thousand years gone unchanged.

I like the place, because here only does criticism vainly attempt to enter. The silence is whole and perfect, making life powerless ; and soon comes friendship with the sad and beautiful ghosts.

Abandoned to imagination, there comes a sense of the absolute beauty and grandeur that make our human world trifling, hardly worth our trouble . It is the magical house of Faith where the real echo of the oldest song will vibrate with the newest wonder, and even a simple little thought, once under the touch of imagination, grows more splendid than any art, more beautiful than life. It is never a question of the volume of song or the weight of thought, but of Faith.

We shall be straightway brought back, if we are once admitted into this wonderful house, to the age of emotion and true love, where we speak only the word of adoration.

Let us be thankful that the reality of the external world has ceased to be a standard, we happily becoming our own god, a Buddha. We shall be a revelation, ourselves an art, of hope and possession which shall never fail.

Sadharna Vihar,
Calcutta.

JOURNEY TO PERSIA*

Rabindranath Tagore

11th April, 1932. I had come to the conclusion that I was past the age for leaving home, and accordingly thought I had settled down for good, when came an invitation from the Shah of Persia. This was one it would hardly do to refuse ; and yet the hesitations of my seventy-year-old body could not be so easily overcome.

My Parsi friend, Dinshaw Irani, assured me from Bombay that he would be my companion from Bushire, and he added that the Persian Consul had also been instructed to accompany and look after me. After this I felt ashamed to aid my physical misgivings.

So it was settled that, in order to avoid the strain of a railway journey, and the discomfort of crossing the Persian Gulf by steamer in the heat of this season, we should go by the Dutch Air Mail. My daughter-in-law, and my secretary, Amiya Chakravarti, were to be with me.

Once before I had the experience of an air journey, from London to Paris. But then I had no special ties with the place from which the ascent was made, so that nothing in the land and water there held me down. This time I had to snap the bonds of my own Bengal, and my heart felt the wrench.

When we started out from the riverside villa, on the outskirts of Calcutta, where we were staying, the day had not yet dawned. The current of the Ganges was noiselessly rippling along in the dark, under the star-lit sky ; the tops of the row of the tall betel palms against our boundary wall were swaying to a gentle breeze ; lower down, the heavy scent exhaled by the shrubberies hung over the garden.

Our motor car picked its way along the narrow, winding village lane, past a row of closed shops somewhat after the town pattern, through an outlying area with here a dilapidated old house, there a deserted temple, and untidy fallow spaces, or occasional thickets, in between. The nests of the birds had not yet become vocal ; and the life of the village, in the thick of its sleep before the dawn, was suspended, like the current of a river just between its ebb and flow.

As we reached the police station with a row of sleeping figures lying on its verandah, the lane turned into the Trunk Road, where-

* Translated from the original Bengali by Surendranath Tagore.

upon, with the dust, rose the pungent smell of modernity, first cousin to the fumes of our own car; the only witnesses of the past being the silent rows of great trees lining the roadside, their age-old foliage raised aloft into the darkness, testifying to the centuries which have passed by the reposeful seclusion of these Bengal villages, at times with a stately march, at others as a stormy whirlwind; Pathan, Moghal, Maratha, and East India Company's sepoys,—all alike writing the history of their successive inroads in the language of dust.

Now we see before us the Dumdum aerodrome, the electric lights twinkling out of its cavernous interior. And, through the vagueness of the gloom yet surrounding it, ghost-like figures of waiting friends and newspaper reporters gradually emerge into view.

The time for departure arrived, our mechanical pegasus, churning up the atmosphere and scattering the litter with its whirling wings, comes roaring out of its cave into the open field. The three of us climb on board and enter the closed cabin. Inside there are two rows of springy seats into some of which we settle ourselves, with such light luggage as is allowed for the journey at our feet; on either side we have glazed windows.

So long as our machine was passing over Bengal, it flew low. The villages, clustering round pieces of water overgrown with weeds, appeared to our gaze like tiny islands dotted over an expanse of bare fields. From the height of our distant view-point they looked like cosy little green nooks, but our hearts could feel the thirst from which the parched land was suffering at the approach of the arid summer, its myriad inhabitants having no other resource to look forward to except the whimsical favours of the Rain-god.

Men, beasts, and birds were all out of sight. No sound, no movement, no sign of vitality,—a world seemingly deserted by Life lay before us, swathed in a patch-work shroud. As we rose higher, even this little remnant of its variety of form was reduced to a pattern of scratchy lines, as though some extinct country, of forgotten name, had recorded its annals on a hard, drab surface, in unknown characters of undecipherable meaning.

It is nearly 10 o'clock. As we approach Allahabad our machine puts its nose down, preparing to land. Nothing is visible from the window to our right save the limitless blue of the sky; through the left window we see the ground rising up to us, slantwise. Our sky-chariot at length touches the earth, and over that its progress is by hops and bumps, as if not sure of a welcome from its surly solidity.

The aerodrome is at some distance from the town. On every side stretch dried-up, sun-baked fields. We are not tempted to leave our cabin. Some officers of the company come up and take a photograph of us. When they produce their autograph books for me to scribble in, I feel inclined to laugh, for my mind is still ringing with the aphorisms of Sankaracharya on the vanity of things mundane. Was it not only a while ago that the scribbings left on a lifeless world were passing before our eyes ? The picture I had just been dwelling on was of a vast emptiness ; all records of its past life obliterated ; the historian himself away on eternal leave ; the very research department buried in the under-world. The present moment seemed to me like the reflection of a parting ray from that dying world.

Here our machine drank its fill of petrol and, in half-an-hour, resumed its journey through the air. Up to this time we had not felt its motion so much, but only suffered from the intolerable din of its propellers, for which there was no possibility of communication between passenger and passenger. My ears stuffed with cotton-wool, I could only look about me. In the front row was a Dane, employed in a sugar-cane plantation in Manila, now going home. He had been busy following our route on a partly rolled-up map, occasionally helping himself to bread and cheese, or chocolate confections. He had a pile of newspapers, brought along with him, which he perused through and through, one after the other. There were, further, three wireless operators who, turn by turn, sat in their appointed corner, with the apparatus strapped to their ears, taking notes or writing up their reports, in the intervals of eating and dozing. These, together with the pilots, comprised our little community, snatched off the earth into isolation, pursuing its course through infinite solitude.

Our plane now flew higher than before, for it had started rocking to the unsettled state of the lower atmosphere. It grew unpleasantly cold. Below us was the stony hardness of Rajputana, covered with a maze of dry watercourses, looking like a widowed region clad in ochre folds of life-long mourning.

At length, in the afternoon, the capital of Jodhpur came into view, standing out of its barren surroundings, and at one end of it yawned the huge nest ready to receive our mechanical bird. Alighting here, we found the Minister, Kunwar Maharaj Singh, and his lady, waiting to conduct us straight away to a tea party. We still had enough life for our bodies to go on with, but its surplus was hardly sufficient to pull us through a social function. Anyhow, we managed

to perform our duty, and then went on to our rest in the hotel,—one specially built by the Ruler of Jodhpur for air-passengers. The Maharaja came to visit us in the evening, and his courtesy was indeed kindly. He is an enthusiastic aviator himself, skilled in all the daring tricks indulged in by the fraternity.

12th April. We had to be up early in the morning to get on board in time for the start. The air conditions were somewhat improved, leaving us a little more fit than we felt the previous day. At noon, we descended in the midst of the hospitably inclined citizens of Karachi. Regaled with dishes specially cooked with her own hands by our hostess, a Bengali lady, we returned to our machine.

We are now flying along the sea-shore,—on our left the blue water, on our right a rocky desert. With the advancing day the atmosphere becomes turbulent. On land the air shows its agitation by its effect on a variety of objects. Here that is indicated solely by the flutterings of our ship. Below we see its light brush-work in white lines of foam drawn across the sea, but neither is the roll of the breakers visible, nor their sound to be heard.

Then, as through its desert gate we enter into Persia, we receive from the Governor of Bushire his distant, wireless greeting. It takes us but a short time to reach Jask from Karachi. This is a small township on the sea-coast, surrounded by desert. It consists of a number of flat-roofed, cubical buildings, scattered here and there, looking like so many earthen boxes.

We find shelter in a travellers' rest-house. There is no variety of scenery in this sea-side sandy waste. For that very reason, perhaps, is this poor Cinderella of a place specially favoured at twilight by the fairy guardian of the horizon. What a solemn grandeur has the sunset, how resplendent is its peace, how magnificent its glory! When after a bath I sat at ease in the open verandah, the mild Spring breeze enveloped me with a world of comfort.

Some Government officials came to bid us welcome. Chairs had been placed on the sand outside, and seated there we entered into conversation with the few of them who could speak English. It became evident that Persia had made up her mind to cast off the worn-out skin of the past, and begin a new life under modern conditions. Society cleared of the rubbish of its past, the mind freed from blind traditions, human relations extended beyond the old barriers, the material world regarded with a scientific outlook piercing through the veil of illusions,—this is what they are out to achieve. They have

understood that the only choice lies between accepting the lessons of the present, or being grievously wounded by it. Wherever the East shows signs of awakening, the same spirit is at work. Those who are unable to cut through the entanglement of the departing age, will have to die with it on the same funeral pyre.

In reply to my question as to how Persia dealt with followers of other religions, I learnt that, previously, the Zoroastrian and the Bahai sects used to be insulted and persecuted, but under the present King, such intolerance has been done away with. All sections of the people now enjoy equal rights, and blood-stained religious fanaticism no longer stalks the land. In a book by Dr. Mohammed Isa Khan Sadiq, which was given to me, I read that only a short while ago the priesthood completely dominated the Government of Persia. With the foundation of modern universities their influence has largely diminished. In the old days anybody and everybody—divinity students, preachers, reciters of the Koran, *Suiyeds*,—they could all dress and pose as Mollahs or priests. Now that is no longer the case. Only those who have passed the requisite examination conducted by acknowledged head-priests of repute, are entitled to assume priestly vestments, resulting in ninety per-cent of self-styled priests being disrobed. "Such were the results," says the author, "of the contact of Persia with the Western world. They could not have been attained without the leadership of Reza Shah Pehlevi, the greatest man that Persia has produced for many centuries."

There is no harm in trying to imagine the effect of some such law, made applicable to the ubiquitous *sanyasins* and *faqirs* of India. Of course, I admit that saintliness cannot be properly tested by examination,—but still less is it proved by outward insignia and high-sounding titles. And yet these latter meaningless proofs are so largely accepted by our countrymen. Heads are bent low, and the earnings of half-starved householders wasted, at the feet of spurious wearers of ascetic garb, flaunting easily earned titles of sainthood,—with no return except that of being duped. Where sanctity is pursued for self-purification and spiritual uplift, any particular designation or vesture is not necessary, rather is it harmful. But if these outward signs be intended for the benefit of disciples, then the worth of their bearers may well be required to be put to the proof. No self-respecting society can afford to neglect the duty of testing the true worth of professions of religion, paraded for the purpose of earning a living or gaining dignity.

13th April. This morning again we had to be up before dawn, for our start was at 4 o'clock in the morning. We arrive at Bushire at half-past eight. The Governor himself is acting as our host, and there is no end to his solicitude for our comfort.

Let me take this opportunity of setting down diverse thoughts that crossed my mind as I, a son of Mother Earth, thus gained my first intimacy with the sky.

The one thing about flying creatures that has struck me from my earliest years is the effortless ease of their motions. The relation of their wings with the air has all the sweetness of friendship. Well do I remember how through the blazing noonday, as I used to gaze and gaze on the circling kites above from the staircase room on our roof, it seemed to me that they were flying, not to serve any purpose, but for sheer joy of their privilege of unimpeded buoyancy,—a joy that was manifest not only in the grace of their movements, but in their own beauty as well. Sails look so beautiful because they are always so nicely adjusted to the wind. The wings of the bird have likewise to be poised in harmony with the air currents, whence their graceful proportions, to say nothing of their play of colour. Motion on earth has always the aspect of effort ; here weight reigns supreme, and there is no getting rid of its burden. The feature of the region of air, that has so long captivated us, is the free play it allows to beauty, escaped from the drag of weight.

Now comes an age when man has taken the burden of the earth up into the air. So it is his power (forcefulness) that is displayed in his flying. Its progress is not in harmony with the wind, but strives against it, carrying the spirit of fight from the lower world into the empyrean. Its voice is not that of a singing bird, but of a raging beast: the earth, having conquered the air, bellows out its victory.

Herald of the modern age, the flying machine is not susceptible to sentiment, it has no use for beauty, it elbows aside whatever does not serve its purpose. Whether rosy dawn suffuses the eastern sky, or the pearly lustre of departed day lingers over the soft blue of the western horizon, this upstart of a machine hideously drones through it all, unashamed, like a monstrous black-beetle.

As it rises higher and higher, it reduces the play of our senses to that of one alone—of sight—and even that is not left in its fullness. All the signs for which we believe the earth to be obviously and variously real, are gradually wiped out, resolving its three-dimensional picture into lines of one dimension only. Thus deprived of its

substantiality, its hold on our mind and heart is loosened. And it is borne in on me how terrible such aloofness can become, once it is found expedient to rain destruction on the vagueness below. Who is the slayer, who the slain? Who is kin, who is stranger? It is a travesty of this teaching of the Gita that the flying machine has raised on high.

A British air-force is stationed at Bagdad. Its Christian chaplain informs me that they are engaged in bombing operations on some Sheikh villages. The men, women and children, there done to death, meet their fate by decree of the upper region of British imperialism,—which finds it so easy thus to shower death because of its distance from its individual victims. So dim and insignificant do those unskilled in the modern arts of killing appear to those who glory in such skill! Christ acknowledged all mankind to be the children of his Father; but for the modern Christian both Father and children have receded into shadows, unrecognisable from the height of his bombarding planes; for which reason these blows are being dealt at the very heart of Christ himself.

The official priest of the Iraq air-force asked, on their behalf, for a message from me. I copy here the message I gave :—

From the beginning of our days man has imagined the seat of divinity to be in the upper air, from which comes light, and blows the breath of life, for all the creatures on this earth. The peace of its dawn, the splendour of its sunset, the voice of eternity in its starry silence, have inspired countless generations of men with a sense of the ineffable presence of the infinite, urging their minds away from the sordid interests of daily life. Man is content with this dust-laden earth for his dwelling place, for the acting of the drama of his tangled life, ever waiting for a call of perfection from the boundless depth of purity in the translucent atmosphere surrounding him. If, in an evil moment, man's cruel history should spread its black wings to invade that realm of divine dreams with its cannibalistic greed and fratricidal ferocity, then God's curse will certainly descend upon us for such hideous desecration, and the curtain will finally be rung down upon the world of Man, of whom God feels ashamed.

On the other hand, I should also mention the feeling of inferiority brought on me by the aeroplane. It is a wonderful machine, but my relation with it was, after all, one of use, not of power. The air-chariot of old, of which we read in story, belonged to the realm of Indra,—mortals, like king Dushyanta, occasionally having a ride by special invitation. That was exactly my situation. The inventors of the aeroplane belong to a different race. Had this achievement of theirs been merely a matter of superior skill, it would not have so affected me, but it denotes greater force of character,—indomitable

perseverance, unflagging courage,—things to be really proud of. For this my salutation went out to them.

Look at our four Dutch pilots,—immensely built, the personification of energy. The country of their birth has not been a drain on their life, but has kept them fresh. Their rude, overflowing health, bequeathed by generations brought up on nourishing food, does not allow them to remain tied down to dull routine. But the millions of India have not enough to eat and, moreover, have been exhausted, within and without, by the toll paid to internal and external enemies. Any attainment of worth depends on the co-operation of man's vital and mental forces. We may have the mind, but where is our vitality? Our starved bodies cannot but shirk the requisite exertion, resulting in perfunctory habits that are killing our people. In the endeavour to solve their food problem Western Governments vie with one another to empty their coffers, not even hesitating to perpetrate cruel injustice on outsiders, knowing that on its solution depends both the material and moral advancement of the nation. In our country the remedy has to be sought individually, hampered, not assisted, by the dispensers of our fate. Being, as I was saying, out of range of their vision, it is punishment that so profusely reaches us, not nourishment.

As the field of view seen from the aeroplane is immensely larger, so is the apparent motion of the objects below correspondingly slower than the speed at which we travel overhead. Owing to the combination of these effects the world as viewed from such height is very different from our usual world, and if the measures of the aeroplane view were to become our normal standard, we should be living in another world altogether. So it struck me that what we call creation is, after all, only the play of a particular set of rhythms. Any system in which these are speeded up or slowed down could be equally called a different "creation." We know that our nerves are not attuned to all rhythms. We see and hear only what comes within the limited range that can be received by our sense apparatus, out of the unlimited variety that we know to exist. Can we then assert that there are not, at this very moment, any number of such separate "creations," imperceptible to one another by reason of incompatible rhythms? The "nature" that the differently receptive minds in those other systems perceive or know is entirely beyond the scope of our imagination, but nevertheless the responses of all of them must be joining to make up a grand symphony rolling on towards the same unknown infinitude.

By Rabindranath Tagore

WHITE AND RED

I

WHITE—colour of the moon poised on high
 in an autumn night—
The soothing peace, the quiet heave
 of an in-gathered rapture !

White—colour of the sun glaring overhead
 in a midsummer sky—
White heat of the Energy that quickens the universe,
The creative ardour of the light of Truth !

White—colour of the pearl reposing in the womb
 of the mother-of-pearl—
Innocence of a little heart, delicate and fine
 and strong in trust.

White—colour of the diamond, miracle of the black-souled ore
 transfigured—
The immaculate consciousness of the Mother,
 the Mother yet of a sin-bred earth !

White—colour of the snow piled on wind-swept peaks
 grim and bare—
Naked and frigid austerity that juts sheer
 into the inviolate worlds beyond !

White—colour of the foam breaking and bubbling
 exultant—
All the passions of my entrails surging and speeding
 to the tranquil refuge of Thy embrace !

White—colour of the jasmine so candid and pure
 and unpretending—
The smiling perfume of the Grace
 that has touched my soul !

White—colour of the lotus—
 the endless commiseration of my Lord
 that has taken body upon earth !

WOMAN IN SOVIET RUSSIA

Impressions of an Indian Woman

Pramila Devi Chaudhuri

ALTHOUGH so many books have been written and continue to be written on the Soviet Union, Russia is still a land of mystery for the ordinary man or woman, and it is still something of an adventure to go there.

Today, when everything seems reduced to terms of dull fact, it is a relief to let one's imagination play on a country which is aloof from the rest of Europe, and which is attempting to build up a life and a constitution for itself on hitherto untried lines. It is impossible to go to Russia with an open mind. Few people reach the country without strong pre-conceived notions of what they are going to see, and those notions affect everything they observe. I certainly found this true during my short stay in Leningrad and Moscow. I was determined that everything, whether good or bad, would be different from my other experiences ; and different I found it.

As I am about to say something of my own impressions of Russian women, it will be as well to begin by stating facts about them that are well-known and capable of verification. Under the Soviet Union any career is open to women equally with men, and they have the same rights as regards marriage, divorce, franchise—in short, all the burning questions that exercise our minds today. Moreover, women are not regarded as a form of cheap labour. They work as a general rule alongside the man and on an equality with him as to payment. They are expected to work, for the State needs their active co-operation, and looks on them as citizens and workers as well as mothers. Thus it takes pains to secure that motherhood shall not make work impossible. To that end every care is taken of mothers by the State, both before and after their confinement.

Women all over the Union hold high offices in all manner of institutions and people do not seem particularly interested, as we should be, in whether there are more women in this or that concern, and if so how many. There is apparently no rivalry between the sexes. The only time we saw such a thing touched on, was in a very propagandist Soviet play, "The Aristocrats". These "aristocrats" were

criminals of all sorts, who were set to work on the construction of a canal near the White Sea. (They got their name from their hatred of work and refusal to do it, unless forced.) There was one camp of women- and another of men-convicts, side by side. The women, by the way, were represented as morally much worse than the men. As time went on, however, the regenerating influence of work and the tact and kindness of the Governor and officials in charge of the camps (not quite the usual idea of a Russian prison colony), effected a great change ; the prisoners were reformed and became more like Girl Guides and Boy Scouts than criminals. When the Governor of the Settlement announced at the end, that the women's camp had been awarded the prize for good conduct, the men were annoyed and disgusted. They were almost knocked over in the triumphant rush of the women coming to take their prizes. But this is by the way, and only drama !

I should say at the beginning, that the women we saw differed a good deal according to their age. The younger ones who have never known the old regime or passed through the revolutions at an age when they could realize and suffer, are keen, cheerful, clear-eyed and enthusiastic for the State of the future. The others, the older generation, look prematurely old and sad. Every generation has its exceptions, of course. Some very cheerful middle-aged women did some old country-dances at an amateur entertainment organised for our benefit, and seemed to enjoy themselves very much. They were neither slim nor graceful, and when a discontented man in the audience asked loudly why they did not give the young ones a chance, they shouted back cheerily—"We are the ones who count, we keep up the old traditions ! They are just modern,—the younger ones indeed !"

Knowing most of the before-mentioned facts regarding women's position in the Soviet Union, and having occasionally revelled in fiction and films dealing with Cossack girls and superwomen conspirators and dictators, I must confess that I expected to find on landing that the towns would be peopled by striking-looking women in various sorts of uniforms. The Soviet boat had rather strengthened me in this idea, as it boasted, of all things, a woman deck-hand who, as the Captain assured us, swabbed the decks, polished the brasses and did her other duties, as competently as any other sailor. She wore the usual men's clothes for her work. There was also a woman wireless operator. The stewardesses were efficient people, rather haughty in

their attitude to the passengers. It was a surprise to see them walking about on duty, with cigarettes in their mouths. At a concert organized by the passengers a stewardess sang, and showed no diffidence or false modesty. Some younger passengers told me that the crew, men and women, joined in all the evening dances that were got up by them, and that it was not unusual for a woman from among them to invite a passenger to dance with her. In fact, a spirit of equality prevailed.

It was, therefore, a disappointment to find on landing, that the women we saw in the streets of Leningrad and Moscow were all uniformly drab and shabby as regards dress,—and not striking in the way of looks.

Let me tell first of the workers one saw in the streets,—tram-drivers, pointswomen for the tramways—these latter usually old and rather wretched looking,—street-sweepers, strong and vigorous, and seeming to take a pride in keeping the city clean. Women are ticket-collectors and sellers in the underground and other railways ; they act as registrars in the marriage and divorce bureaux, ushers in the law courts—and in many other capacities. We also saw girls and women in bands, drilling in the public squares alongside of the men. They did not seem to be Amazons, but looked quite ordinary.

The women we came most into contact with were the guides, as also the chamber-maids and employees in our hotels. The guides are certainly a race apart. The State runs an "Intourist" organization, which is a travel-agency like that of Thos.Cook. Most of their employees are young women. After leaving School, they are given a special training in different European languages for three years, and are then qualified to act as guides to the tourists of different nationalities. After the tourist season is over, they spend the rest of the year, apart from their leave, in study and refresher courses. They are very competent and usually speak their foreign languages well. They are most helpful, though one cannot help feeling that they have a certain scorn for tourists as "luxury" travellers, who require comfort and consideration that they have not earned, but whose money is useful. Young as they are, they are capable of coping with the most difficult situations and tourists. Unlike guides in other countries, they do not subordinate themselves to their clients, but keep the latter in order. We were much amused and impressed by a young guide, who sternly reprimanded an elderly Englishwoman who held some distinguished position in her own country, for always keeping

the whole party waiting to start, through her unpunctuality. This guide never allowed the tourists she was taking over places of interest, to straggle behind or to delay her. When we were embarking for London at Leningrad, it transpired that Intourist had made a stupid muddle over the allotting of cabins, etc., for which the guide in charge was attacked virulently by many of the passengers. Although she was quite young, she held her own against her discontented and mostly middle-aged opponents, and her "take it or leave it" attitude was worthy of a duchess in fiction. Most of the guides were well informed as regards the things that interested the tourists, and could answer questions up to a certain point; though they were well-trained in propaganda and rarely revealed any of what they call the "negative" side of the Soviet working to seekers of information.

They work hard and deserve respect. The chamber-maids at the hotels seemed survivals of the old regime. They were mostly elderly, and had none of the independence that strikes one in the other women. They were always on the look-out for tips and gifts, and those who could talk French told us dismal stories of their homes and families. For there is family-life in Russia. I was not lucky enough to visit any home, but some from our party who had done so, assured me that it existed; moreover, not all women availed themselves of the communal kitchens, though the housing difficulty being very great—too many people have lately flocked into the towns, and there is much overcrowding—the communal kitchens and other such institutions are very useful.

Rightly or wrongly, the word women is usually associated with the word children; and some mention of the latter must be made when talking of homes. Everyone knows that the Soviet Union is doing everything it can to ensure health, happiness and knowledge for the children. And certainly those we saw in the parks and streets and children's theatres and so on, looked well-cared-for and healthy. They did not seem to be State-owned, dressed in uniforms, and not looked after by their mothers. There seemed to be a large percentage of women proudly pushing perambulators or giving babies and elder children an airing in the parks. Of course, they may not have been their mothers!

But no exaggerated respect is shown for a woman simply because she is a mother. I was much amused at an incident that happened to me in a theatre. A Russian journalist, attracted no doubt by my *sari*, came up with the obvious intention of interviewing me for his paper.

He said in quite fluent English: "Madame is an artiste?"—Reluctantly I answered "No!"—"a doctor then!—a teacher?—a sociologist?"—going through all the various distinguished professions and occupations,—while I, miserably conscious of my inferiority, had to answer "No" each time. Finally in despair, I said priggishly,—“I am just a wife and a mother.” He was obviously much disappointed, but said kindly, “A wife and a mother. That is good—but!” The interview was short.

As regards motherhood, any Russian woman can refuse it. But we were told by the doctor at an “abortorium” that when a woman is clearly physically fit to have a child and there is no social reason against it, the doctors try to persuade her to go through with it, and are very often successful in doing so. So the tales of those queues waiting before the abortorium, which are so long that the baby of the last woman in the line is born before she can get in, are not so funny after all. One of our younger guides told us that abortions were frequent among students, alleging as a reason:—“They marry young to be together, but having a baby interrupts their studies, and makes them lose a precious year; so it is better to put it off to another time!” This course seemed to her quite natural.

We also visited a marriage bureau in Moscow. As I said before, the officials there are women. We saw several couples in the bureau, and the clerk told us that business was usually brisk. We found no one but a clerk in the divorce bureau on the next floor, and she said she had not been very busy lately. We had been told in England that a marriage on one day and a divorce on the next was a common occurrence, but she assured us that it was not so. Even though the law might permit it, public opinion was very much against that sort of thing.

Good actresses in Russia get good salaries, and looking through the programmes we saw that the coveted titles “people’s artist”, “artist crowned by the republic”, were more or less equally bestowed among the actors and actresses. There seem to be as many women- as men-doctors. The baby clinic we visited was run by women. They seemed very capable. The teaching profession is held in respect, and care is taken in the training for it. It is interesting to hear, that a judge and a senior teacher receive the same salary, though as I do not know what that salary is (it is always difficult to get at exact figures), I cannot tell whether women teachers here would receive higher salaries in Russia than in India, or judges correspondingly lower ones. We

only visited one school ; it was run on co-education lines. The girls and mistresses struck us as being much like their prototypes all the world over. A daring member of our party asked the headmaster if co-education led to any emotional complications between teachers or pupils ; but a firm "No" was the only reply. Here let me say, that this attitude of companionship and equality between man and woman is definitely good, is shown in many ways. I was much struck by the remarks of two very pretty young English girls in our party, who told me that Russia was the only country in Europe, including England, where they had not been subjected to rude staring or unpleasant attentions from men in streets or theatres and other places.

We went to a law-court, the "Court of Appeal", during a sitting. Of the three judges on the bench, two were women. We were glad to see that one of these seemed to be the most important, for she occupied the middle chair and seemed to do most of the talking.

There is no official religion in Russia, as the atheism it professes cannot be called a religion. As all know, there are anti-God museums, but they seem to exist more for the purpose of exposing the weaknesses and crimes of the priests and devotees of the various religions, than to execrate the founders of them. Many people say that no country can be great without a supernatural religion, and that women who have no faith lose all that can guide and ennoble them. Certainly all the younger women we were able to question, took up an anti-religious attitude, saying that religion was all very well for the old and foolish. But it seems to me that they are deeply religious. Their devotion to their leaders (Lenin's tomb is almost a place of pilgrimage), their love for the country, and their selfless working for the ideal State that they are striving to establish, may be called their religion ; and so long as such feelings exist, there is no cause to despair of the future.

To touch on a dark topic, prostitution. This is much less in Russia than elsewhere. Marriage is easy, divorce is easy, and everyone who is willing can find work. We were told that many prostitutes came of their own accord to the institutions set up for their regeneration, and after a course of training, work was found for them. One of these girls, it appears, has just qualified as a barrister. That all careers are open to Russian women, and that they work with, and on the same terms as, men, does not make them what Victorians called "unfeminine" or "mannish". They retain their charm for men—one sees a multitude of couples along the roads—and marriages are not on the decrease. I have spoken of their usual drab appearance ; that is



By Rabindranath Tagore

not due to choice, but to want of supplies of better clothes. One sees modest attempts to mitigate the dullness of the dress, with a ribbon here, a bright scarf, a striking hat there. Most of the girls one sees, have their hair shortwaved, curled or set,—which argues a regard for appearances. They take an interest in the clothes of others. On one occasion, a party of tourists complained to their guide of what they considered rude behaviour on the part of some girls and women, who seemed to be staring very fixedly at them. The guide questioned the offenders, who replied : “Well, they are so well-dressed, it interests us.” The *sari* roused the usual amount of attention,—at times most embarrassing !

After all, I find my impressions of Russian women just the same as my impressions of Leningrad and Moscow ; they are so much the same as other women and other cities, and yet so different. There is something in the atmosphere of the Soviet Union, some intense element that gives ordinary things and people a quality impossible to define, but which will be a great factor in the building up of a nation that will come close to the ultimate ideal and show the world something new and desirable.

I have not been able to do justice to my subject, but who could do justice to such a country as Russia, or to such superior beings as women ?

A PRAYER

LET honour come to me from Thee
through a call to some desperate task,
in the pride of poignant suffering.

Lull me not into languid dreams ;
Shake me out of this cringing in the dust ;
Out of the fetters that shackle our mind,
make futile our destiny ;
Out of the unreason that bends our dignity down
under the indiscriminate feet of dictators ;
Shatter this age-long shame of ours,
And raise our head
into the boundless sky,
into the generous light,
into the air of freedom.

Rabindranath Tagore

PROFESSOR MORIZ WINTERNITZ

Dr. Manilal Patel

I

MORIZ WINTERNITZ was born in Horn in Lower Austria on the 23rd December, 1863. Having finished his early education in his native town, he joined the Vienna University in the year 1880. In the beginning of his university days he attended lectures on Classical Philology and on Pure Philosophy. Both of these subjects held for a time an equally strong fascination for young Winternitz so that it was difficult for him to make a quick choice of either of them for specialisation. During the summer term of 1881 the renowned Orientalist Dr. Georg Buehler accepted professorship of Sanskrit in the University of Vienna and almost at the very first meeting with him, Winternitz seems to have resolved that he too would specialize in Indology and devote his whole life to the interpretation of the literature and culture of ancient India to the Western world. Consequently he took up the study of Sanskrit under Buchler, and at the same time continued to learn Linguistics and Ethnology from Friedrich Mueller, who also by his learning and personality exercised great influence on him.

In 1885 Winternitz obtained his Doctorate, and about a year thereafter his first book, *Apastambiyam Grhyasutram: The Apastambiya Grhyasutra with Extracts from the Commentaries of Haradatta and Sudarsanarya*, was published in Vienna by the firm of Hoelder.

At that time Professor Max Mueller of the Oxford University was in search of a young Sanskritist to assist him as an amanuensis in the preparation of a second edition of the *Rigveda-Samhita*, of which the then Maharajah of Vijayanagara had offered to defray all the expenses. Dr. Winternitz was selected for the post on the recommendation of Professor Buehler. He, therefore, went to Oxford in 1888 and spent in England a decade, full of hard, strenuous work required for preparing the press copy of the *Rigveda*.

All those who have even once used the second edition of the *Rigveda* would at once say what an extraordinary amount of patience and zeal and scientific precision this work must have claimed from Dr. Winternitz. Recognising his services Prof. Max Mueller remarks in the Preface to the same edition (p. liv): "In all this work Dr. Winternitz has proved himself a pupil worthy of his teacher, Professor

Buehler, conscientious, accurate, yet not pedantic, and has earned the gratitude of all scholars who in future will use this new edition in pursuit of their Vedic studies." Even if the fame of Dr. Winternitz were to rest on his labours on this edition alone, his name would surely be ranked with the foremost scholars of Indology.

But Dr. Winternitz was not a man to rest content with only one achievement, splendid as it might be. Along with his work on the Rigveda, he translated a few books of Max Mueller¹ from English into German, contributed many learned papers to the *Denkschriften der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften* and published two works : (i) *Das altindische Hochzeitsrituell nach dem Apastambiya Grhyasutra und einigen anderen verwandten Werken, mit Vergleichung der Hochzeitsgebräuche bei den uebrigen indogermanischen Voelkern* (1892), and (ii) *The Mantrapatha*, or the Prayer-book of the Apastambins in "Anecdota Oxoniensia" (1897), completing thereby his studies on the Apastamba Grhyasutra, the first of which had appeared in 1887.

Three other literary activities, which Dr. Winternitz had commenced while in England, also deserve mention. He had begun cataloguing the Vedic MSS. in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, which work was later finished by Professor Keith.² He had been, moreover, entrusted to prepare a catalogue of the so-called Whish Collection of the South Indian MSS. in the Royal Asiatic Society, London. And he had collected material for the General Index³ to the 49 volumes of the *Sacred Books of the East Series*. All these undertakings he had nearly completed when, acting on the advice of his intimate friends, he "habilitated" in 1899 as an extraordinary professor of Indology and Ethnology in the German University at Prague, Czechoslovakia, from which position he was raised to 'Ordinarius' in 1911.

It is necessary to dwell a little longer on the importance of the South Indian MSS. of the Whish Collection for a critical edition of the Mahabharata. Dr. Winternitz made a penetrating study of these MSS. and in a series of illuminating articles⁴ he showed, perhaps for

1. The most noteworthy being *Anthropologische Religion*, Leipzig, 1894.

2. Published in 1905 from Oxford.

3. Published as Vol. 50 of *SBE*. in 1910.

4. See particularly :—"On the South-Indian Recension of the Mahābhārata", *Ind. Ant.* Vol. 27, 1898, pp. 67-81 ; 92-104 ; 122-136 ; "On the Mahābhārata MSS. in the Whish Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society", *JRAS.* 1898, pp. 147-150. See also his addresses at the XIth, XIIth, and XIIIth International Congress of Orientalists held respectively at Paris, Rome and Hamburg.

the first time, how indispensable they were for ascertaining the correct readings of the text of the Great Epic. In order to make Winternitz's instructive notes on these MSS. accessible to a larger circle of scholars, F. W. Thomas described the remaining MSS. (Nos. 191-215) and the entire work appeared in 1902 under the title, *A Catalogue of South Indian Sanskrit Manuscripts (especially those of the Whish Collection) belonging to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, London (Asiatic Society Monographs, 2).

The immediate result of the publication of the studies on the Great Epic by Dr. Winternitz was that a tremendous interest about the Mahabharata was created among the Indologists of the world at large, and owing to his persistent insistence that a "critical edition of the Mahabharata was a *sine qua non* for all historical and critical research regarding the Great Epic", a strong European Committee was soon formed by the International Association of Academies to devise ways and means to hasten the day when such an edition would be ready at hand.¹ But, fortunately for us, it was left to India, the Motherland of the Epic, to make a successful attempt at removing the want of an authentic edition of the Mahabharata, to which I shall presently refer.

II

After settling down at Prague, Professor Winternitz continued his researches both in Indology and in Ethnology with increasing comprehensiveness. The Mahabharata was of course uppermost in his mind, while his interest in Ethnology is revealed in his many papers on magic, popular medicine, customs, cults, codes, ceremonies, etc., in ancient India. Besides teaching Sanskrit in the University, he delivered lectures on folklore, ethnology, comparative religion, and philosophy. He was also interested in palaeontology as is clear from his long dissertation "Was wissen wir von den Indogermanen?" ("What do we know of the Indo-Europeans?") published in 1903 from Munich. While he was busy with so many problems concerning India's past, he was also preparing a work which was destined to be his *magnum opus*, namely, *Geschichte der Indischen Litteratur* ("History of Indian Literature"). Originally Dr. Winternitz had

1. For a detailed story of the European attempts at preparing a critical Edition of the Mahābhārata, see Vishnu S. Sukthankar, *Prolegomena* (pp. 1 f.) to the *Adiparvan* of the *Mahabharata* (Poona, 1933), and Winternitz, "The Critical Edition of the Mahabharata" in *Indologica Pragensia*, I, pp. 58-63.

contemplated to complete this History in a single volume, but it soon became clear to him that much more space was necessary if justice was to be done to the entire stretch of Indian literature from the Vedic times upto the present day, incorporating the results of the most important researches in the various branches of Indology. He had therefore to devote to it three large volumes covering in all about 1600 pages. The first volume of this History in German appeared in 1907 (C. F. Amelang, Leipzig), and the last one in 1922. This is indeed the most important and permanent contribution that Professor Winternitz has made in the field of Indological studies, and the inestimable value of this monumental encyclopaedia of Indian literature becomes more and more realized as days pass by.

Soon after finishing this great work, Professor Winternitz came to India in response to an invitation extended to him by the Poet Dr. Rabindranath Tagore for joining the Visva-Bharati as a Visiting Professor. On his way to Santiniketan Prof. Winternitz halted for a few days at Poona, examined the work that was going on there in connection with the project of the Mahabharata edition, and gave an impetus to the same with advice based on his mature scholarship and deep scientific insight into the manuscript-material of the different recensions of the Great Epic. Naturally, this undertaking of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, immensely gratified Prof. Winternitz, himself a great exponent of the Mahabharata research.

The story of his stay in Santiniketan and of active, sympathetic interest in the progress of the Visva-Bharati, which he once called an "ingenious and courageous attempt at realizing a poet's dream", is at once inspiring and glorious. Besides taking regular classes, and delivering general lectures, he took part in almost all the activities of this Institution, and assisted its growth as much as he could without any ostentation. He initiated, moreover, some of our research workers into the technique of editing MSS. along the modern, scientific methods of text-criticism, and the Mahabharata collation work that is being done here owes its origin and inspiration to that great scholar-friend of Santiniketan.¹

While in India, Professor Winternitz delivered a course of six Readership lectures at the Calcutta University, already published in book-form (*Some Problems of Indian Literature*, Calcutta University,

1. For Rabindranath Tagore's valedictory address and Dr. Winternitz's fitting reply, on the occasion of the latter's departure see *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, (Old Series) Vol. I pp. 303-308.

1925), and similar discourses at various centres of learning in India. The Calcutta University also requested him to prepare an up-to-date version of his German work *Geschichte der Indischen Litteratur* and offered to publish the same so that this most important work on Indology might no longer remain a sealed book to those who could not read German. Professor Winternitz readily accepted the offer, and it was to this task of preparing a second, revised and improved edition of the *History of Indian Literature* that he devoted the last fourteen years of his busy life. So far two volumes of this edition have appeared, the first one in 1927, and the second one in 1934; and both these were greeted with the greatest acclamation which they fully deserved. He was working on the third and concluding volume down to the time of his death, and it is a great pity that Prof. Winternitz did not live long enough to see the whole of his 'Lebensarbeit' in this newly-published form. Man proposes, God disposes!

There are many other articles, studies, books, reviews, etc., of lesser scope but equally bearing the stamp of his deep erudition and ripe scholarship, which cannot be enumerated here for want of space. The total number of these publications of his exceeds 400. Reference must, however, be made to two of his books on Buddhism, namely, *Der aeltere Buddhismus* (1929) and *Der Mahayana Buddhismus* (1930), both published in Berthelot's well-known series "Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch", and both these are excellent in their kind. His book on the position of woman in the Brahmanical literature (*Die Frau im Brahmanismus*, Leipzig, 1920) also needs to be mentioned.

In 1929 Professor Winternitz was instrumental in starting two new Oriental journals at Prague:—*Indologica Pragensia* and *Archiv Orientalni*, to both of which he was a constant contributor. And we in India gratefully know how often he adorned our research journals, particularly *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, *Indian Culture*, and *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute*, with his learned and thoughtful papers.

III

A pertinent question may be asked: What was the attitude of Dr. Winternitz towards the literary heritage of India? For, we find

1. A bibliography of the publications of Dr. Winternitz, complete upto 1933, was published by Prof. O. Stein and W. Gampert on pp. 275-291 of *Archiv Orientalni* vol. vi (1934), no. 1, which was dedicated to Prof. Dr. Winternitz upon his 70th birthday.

two types of Indologists in the West : those who have no doubt mastered the rules of Sanskrit grammar, and of the meanings of individual words, but fail or refuse to realise the deeper significance and the spirit of the sacred texts of India ; and those who, whilst they are unsparing in their honest criticism of the darker side of our past, have deeply appreciated and respected the great and noble thoughts of our literature. That the approach of Prof. Winternitz to Indian literature was always scientific and, at the same time, sympathetic will be evident from the following two passages, chosen at random, from his writings.

Speaking on the Upanishads, he says: "The philosopher poets of the Upanishads will always be admired and esteemed in the East and in the West, not because they have *found* the truth, but because they have *struggled* so earnestly for truth, because in their philosophical poetry the eternally unsatiated human *longing* for knowledge has found such fervent expression. What makes the Upanishads so extremely valuable for us, is not that they contain '*superhuman* conceptions', but rather that they contain *human*, entirely human *attempts* at coming as near the truth as possible. And in this sense they will always keep a prominent place in the literature of the world and in the history of human thought."¹

As regards the contributions that Indian literature has made to world-literature he says :

"And let us hope that these contributions will help to strengthen the knowledge that *East and West have never been separate, and can never be separated*. Many a question I raised in this evening's lecture had to remain unanswered. But however desirable it may be for a historian to come to definite conclusions about all these problems and questions, it is only *one* lesson we learn from all the comparisons between Indian literature and the literatures of the world—the great lesson *not only of the unity of East and West, but of the unity of mankind*. . . .

"The Vedanta teaches that he only can be saved who *knows* the Unity. Civilised mankind also can only escape that ruin which is terribly near, by the *knowledge* that all *disunion* is infatuation, is Maya, and that *union* only is real, is truth. May India help the West in realising this truth!"²

1. *Some Problems of Indian Literature*. pp. 61-62.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 81.

IV

This is but a short sketch¹ of the life and literary activities of Professor Dr. Moriz Winternitz whose sudden passing away on the 9th of January, 1937, will be mourned not only in Czechoslovakia and Austria, but in the scholarly world at large. India's grief at his death is particularly deep both for his precious intellectual service to her literature and for his being one of her sincerest friends abroad. He had a genuine interest in modern India and her problems, as may be seen from his occasional writings on Mahatma Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, Non-violence and Ahimsa.

Though a recognised great savant, Prof. Winternitz was entirely free from any tinge of pride often attributed to Pandits. Recently his 70th birthday was made an occasion for messages of cordial congratulations from his friends and admirers all over the world, and in commemoration of that auspicious occasion he was presented with a memorial volume (*Festschrift Moriz Winternitz*, Leipzig, 1933) which contained 46 learned papers on Indology and allied subjects, contributed by well-known scholars of the day. Every one of the messages received an individual and thankful acknowledgment from the pen of Prof. Winternitz. He was also honoured by learned societies of many countries who had elected him their honorary member.

From the early days of his literary activities Dr. Winternitz evinced a keen interest in the modern movement for the emancipation of woman: his various articles indicating and advocating the progress of this movement reflect a happy blend in him of the scholar and the enlightened reformer. In a beautiful essay, "Religion und Moral" (Prague, 1922), he upheld the ethical ideal of man against the recent tendencies of ridiculing it, and showed how moral life leads to the realisation of the divine through constant elimination of the non-divine elements from our daily conduct.

Professor Winternitz was very scrupulous even in the minor offices of social life. A delightful host and a kind friend, he reminds one indeed of what Plato called "a man magnificent in mind". Not merely scholarship but an intense interest in humanity wherever it be found, governed the course of his noble life and made him a firm believer in the unity of mankind. All those who ever came in personal

1. For some details of this sketch, my thanks are due to Professors Lesny and Stein who published short notices about Dr. Winternitz on the occasion of his 70th birthdate (resp. in *Archiv Orientalni*, VI, no. 1; and in *LO*. 57).

touch with him were agreeably struck by his innate courtesy, understanding sympathy, and by the dignity of a man of character, learning and religious sincerity.

He had the highest regard for the Poet Rabindranath Tagore about whose life and work he wrote and spoke on many an occasion. He dedicated the second edition of his *History of Indian Literature* to "Rabindranath Tagore, the Great Poet, Educator, and Lover of man . . . as a token of loving admiration and sincere gratitude." Only last year Professor Winternitz published a beautiful little book in German entitled: *Rabindranath Tagore : Religion und Weltanschauung des Dichters* (Prague, 1936). It is common knowledge that the Poet also held him in high esteem and that their mutual regard had flowered into beautiful friendship and affection.

And to those of us like me, who had ever received from him help and inspiration in research, the loss in his all too sudden death, the loss of a friend and guide, is too fresh and tremendous to allow our gratitude to be expressed in words. A prayer at once rises in our hearts:

May his soul rest in Peace !

MUNSHI PREMCHAND

G. M.

IN every country, down the ages, one finds that the aristocracy of the Mind has often carried with it an air of Olympian aloofness, thus creating a gulf between the intelligentsia and the illiterate. Now and again, however, there have arisen some aristocrats of the Spirit, who have bridged over this gulf with the inter-relationship of their intuition and effortless everyday expression. But such an alliance of the varying grades of intelligence does not last long, as the Mind is always suffering from the itch for exclusive ascendancy.

In India, too, the gulf between the intellectual and the ignorant had been widening for several decades when, towards the close of the latter half of the last century the aspiration for Nationhood began to spread far and wide, and the chasm began to contract. Then came on the scene Mahatma Gandhi, who gave a definite democratic turn to the educated people's life and literary tastes. Among those who felt the impact of this influence in their literary work was Munshi Premchand, the pioneer Hindi short-story writer, who passed away in October 1936.

Premchand, or Nawabrai as he was known in his early years, was born in 1880, at Pandepur, five miles from Benares. His father was a clerk in the Post Office, earning a salary of Rs. 20/- per month. Being orthodox in his social views, he got his son married at the early age of fifteen years when he was still a student in the school. A year after the marriage, the father died, leaving his family exposed to a precarious existence. So the boy had perforce to cut short his scholastic career. But as he had great love for learning, he continued his interest in knowledge in spite of the privations of poverty, by taking up one or two tuitions, to balance both sides of his already heavily depleted domestic budget. But he appears to have carried his cross cheerfully, for, later on he once wrote to a friend of his : "I am glad nature and fortune have helped me and my lot is cast with the poor. It gives me spiritual relief."

One day, however, luck smiled on him. He got a teacher's appointment on Rs. 18/- per month, and in due course by sheer dint of hard work he graduated and rose to be a Sub-Deputy Inspector of Schools. Then he became a teacher in the Normal School, Gorakhpur.

He resigned that job when the Non-co-operation Movement was first launched, thereafter devoting himself more or less wholly to literary work. In this he had his inspiration from the life of Mahatma Gandhi. As he has said at one place, "When Mahatma Gandhi came to Gorakhpur in 1920 and I saw him I felt myself as if a dead man had come to life again."

Of course, prior to 1920, too, Premchand had been doing some literary work. In fact, this began as far back as 1902 when he wrote several stories and one or two novels in Urdu. In 1907 his first collection of short stories appeared in book form, under the title of *Soz-i-Watan*. It had the honour of being baptised with the displeasure of the authorities, though the Urdu writers of the time saw in him the appearance of a highly promising author on the literary horizon. Between then and before he breathed his last he wrote about a dozen novels, two plays and about three hundred short stories, besides translating several of the stories of Tolstoy and plays of Galsworthy. He, further, changed his medium from Urdu to Hindi.

It is, however, in the field of short stories that he occupies a unique position among the Hindi writers of to-day. As is well-known, the writing of the short story in Hindi in the sense in which that term is understood began only with the ushering in of the present century, though a few years before Rabindranath had already made use of that literary form in Bengali. And it is not improbable that Premchand got an insight into the technique of writing short stories from his works. But, as is evident from his books, he handled it with the skill of a master.

Apart from the fact that the language used by Premchand in his Hindi works is such as can be understood easily by the intelligentsia and the illiterate,—thus helping to break down one of the barriers between the "classes and the masses",—his stories particularly reveal the soul of India. They are a transcript of the life of the sons of the soil, who live in her villages. But they are not a mere transcript; they have in them a ring of the Eternal in man. They amply satisfy his own standard of an ideal short story: "It must throw some light on one or the other aspect of life; it must examine critically and courageously the conventions of society; deepen the inherent instincts in man for the good, the true and the beautiful and quicken his sense of curiosity."

NIRUKTA = HERMENEIA

(Addendum)

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

IN the Viśva-Bharati Quarterly for August 1936, p. 15, I spoke of the Oṃkāra as being the "sum of all language" (*vācikaṃ sarvanmayam*), and "that one thing by which when it is known all things are known". There is a remarkable text to exactly this effect in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* II. 23. 3, "As all the leaves (of a book) are pinned together by a spike, so all speech (*sarvā vāc*) is pinned together by the Oṃkāra ; verily, the Oṃkāra is all this, the Oṃkāra verily all this" ; and for this, too, a striking parallel in Dante, *Paradiso* XXXIII. 85-92, "Within its depths I saw ingathered, bound by love in one volume, the scattered leaves of all the universe . . . after such fashion that what I tell of is one simple flame. The universal form of this complex I think that I beheld". The parallel is all the closer because in the first case the universal form is that of the eternal sound, in the other that of the eternal light ; for light and sound are coincident *in divinis* (cf. *sva* and *svara*), and just as Dante speaks of "these singing suns" (*Paradiso*, X. 76, cf. XVIII. 76 "So within the lights the flying creatures sang"), so the *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* III. 33 has "The Sun is sound, therefore they say of this Sun 'It is as sound that He proceeds' " (*svara eti*), and in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* I. 5. 1, "The Sun is Oṃ, for He is ever sounding forth 'Oṃ' ".

Incidentally, the *Chāndogya* passage cited above, "As all the leaves are pinned together by a spike" (*yathā śaṅkunā sarvāṇi paṇṇāni saṃtṛṇṇāni*) affords very strong evidence for the contemporaneity of writing with the redaction of this *Upaniṣad*, for everyone who has seen a South Indian palm leaf Ms. of many leaves held together by a spike passed through one of the string-holes will recognize the aptness of the simile.

DREAMS

Dreams make mortality divine,
And through their fluent forms
Inspire the splendours men design
To frame their earthly counterpart.

Yet sunset hues to mists distil,
And dreams fade too, with their first breath,
Unless their fleeting shadows thrill
The lonely stronghold of a heart.

But in some distant heritage
Beyond imagination's flight,
Fresh dreams of youth, frail dreams of age,
Are mingled with the dreams of God.

H. COLVILLE-STEWART.

REVIEWS

BASES OF YOGA : by Sri Aurobindo.

Arya Publishing House, Calcutta.

THIS appears to be the latest book on the teachings of the venerable Saint of Pondicherry. But it is not really a work written out by him for publication, as it embodies mere "extracts from letters written by Sri Aurobindo to his disciples in answer to their queries", as the Publishers' Note puts it. They are "put together and arranged here so as to be of some help to aspirants for the understanding and practice of the Yoga", to quote again from the same Note. As the collection stands, and in view of the practical purpose for which it has been put in print, it can hardly be said to require any review in the ordinary sense of the term. Yet I find, rather curiously, that the publishers want an elaborate review in the *Quarterly*.

It is difficult to do adequate justice to the publication, distinctly meant for the guidance of those who are already on the path to spiritual advancement by practices of a unique kind—practices which have had a traditional recognition and sanction, coming down from a hoary past of this land, among those who belong to mystic orders of religious life. The book is neither a philosophical discourse, nor a psychological exposition, in the usual sense of the terms. Yet the lessons embodied in this small work appear to have a deep philosophical basis and deeper psychological tenets, not usually found in the current texts under the name, that are coming out in the day, rather in large and rapid numbers, from the West. What these philosophical bases are cannot be made out adequately and fully from the extracts quoted and embodied in the book. They may be well-known to those who are in immediate touch with and under the teachings of the great saint. There are, here and there, certain terms used in the "answers to queries", which have no doubt a deep philosophical significance to the Master and his disciples.

But for those who, like the present writer, have not had the good fortune of being placed at the feet of the Master, the underlying concepts and meanings are almost enigmatic. They are not properly explained and expounded in a systematic manner. This was not, of course, possible here, the main purpose of the teachings, conveyed through

these letters, being a practical guidance of the initiates in the path of Yoga. As such it is not what may be called a *Yoga-Darsana*, like that of Patanjali. There may be some points of agreement, here and there, between these teachings of the Saint and those of Patanjali. But in the main the paths inculcated by them respectively are somewhat different. There is nothing to be wondered at in this difference. For the practice of Yoga, coming down from the ancient days, has not been exactly the same from time to time and in different sects of different countries—east or west. The actual paths followed have been different as a matter of fact, although the goal may have been the same or similar. What Patanjali did in this country was a systematic presentation, in his work, of the practices prevalent traditionally at his time and perhaps in the sect to which he might have belonged. He claimed no originality here, as the very first *sutra* of his work implies :—“*Atha yoganushasanam*”—“Now a presentation of the old teachings of Yoga”.

Patanjali, however, does not confine himself merely to the practical side of Yoga, but offers at the same time its philosophical basis, derived from an earlier school of the Samkhya, prevalent before the bifurcation of the same system of thought into the Samkhya of Ishwara Krishna and that of Patanjali. For the position of the latter also goes by the same name, as we find from the commentary of Vyasa. The two positions have also much in common to justify the same name. But the philosophical basis of the teachings embodied in the book, under review, is not entirely Samkhya of either type, nor is it Vedanta of the monistic or other types, although there are, as I find, certain metaphysical terms and ideas taken from them all. What the system of thought is there underlying the teachings is difficult to make out. We can only hope and trust that there is such a system. The interest of the Master was not to present here a metaphysical theory of the universe or of human nature in relation to the universe, but a practical one, however ultimately based it may be on his own implicit philosophy.

But the psychological bases on which instructions are given have a unique value of their own. Here the Master touches on and taps a deeper level of human mind, little understood or recognised by the present-day movements of the west. Looking to these diverse movements on their theoretical side, we are simply puzzled, failing to find in them a definite standpoint and agreed conclusions. The whole procedure appears to be in a melting-pot, except on its experimental

side which is of course making positions and valuable contributions to our understanding of the behaviour of the human and sub-human mind on its common and practical level. But that this is not the only level of our conscious life is hardly recognised in their procedure, except in certain spiritual circles, whose experiences, and views based on them, are declared either as mere fancies or pathological conditions of mind by the orthodox professional psychologists, innocent of such experiences. But the fact is—a fact that is being tardily recognised in certain circles of the professional class also—that the conscious life has several levels, each with its special characteristics and modes of operation. The experiences of a truly spiritual or religious life belong to a sphere of our inner life, of which we may have only vague glimpses at times on the ordinary level, but never in full and clear view of them. They can only be realised truly and adequately by those whose mental life has risen up to the height and depth, at which the experiences appear in their own light. The psychology of religious consciousness is still in its infancy in the west. The little work that has been done hitherto in the field is overlaid too much with the concepts of the usual standpoint of current psychology. Both the descriptions and explanations of the unique experiences of religious consciousness at its pure and true level are mostly approached and borrowed from the usual common level of mental life. In the treatment of the subject on these lines, there is, no doubt, found here and there a dim insight into the upper levels among some sincere writers. But there is yet nothing like a systematic treatment of these levels in their own nature and their relations to each other.

The psychological standpoint adopted among the ancient thinkers of this land has been quite of a different kind. With them the facts of conscious life do not appear to have been treated from a narrow view of their nature and inter-relations. There is found, on the contrary, a candid recognition of the different levels of that life, more or less in different systems of Indian Thought. In the system of Yoga, we find a special prominence is given to the working of higher levels of mind, not only by Patanjali, but also by Buddhistic and Jaina writers treating of the bases of Yoga. But the bases, as taught in the work under review, are not entirely of the traditional type, as we find them treated in the orthodox and unorthodox schools. In this respect the treatment by the saintly teacher under consideration here is almost unique and to a certain extent modern. It embodies, it

appears plainly, the deep experiences and thoughts of the Master realised by well-trying practices and profound meditations in his own life. As such, the book offers to an outsider an insight into the nature of life led, not only by the Master himself, but also by those who belong to the circle of his disciples in the Asrama at Pondicherry. Whether outside readers of the book will get any spiritual help from the high teachings contained in it, without the necessary practices under the guidance of the Master, it is not possible to say. But this much can be asserted with confidence that for those who have faith in the worth and reality of spiritual life and an inclination to lead that life, they will certainly get an outlook on it widening and deepening their ordinary views, which no book of the kind I know of will afford so clearly and pointedly.

The author's sound criticisms on the position of the present-day 'New Psychology' of the West, particularly of the Freudian school, are worth careful study. He exposes the errors and attendant dangers of the position so remarkably that the enthusiastic followers of Freud must halt in their over-confident devotion to their own Master. Fortunately for them, the old Master has ceased to emphasise his earlier position, which has of late undergone distinct modifications from his hand. Only the outlook needs further expansion on deeper lines. And here, at least, the present contributions made from the experiences of the saintly author to the psychology of mental life might be of some valuable help to those who have an open eye on the subject. This is the hope of the present reviewer. May the teachings on other and more practical matters benefit those for whom the publication was meant.

P. B. Adhikari.

POEMS : by George Keyt.

Gamini Press, Kandy, 1936.

THIS is another book of modern verse which proves Mr. Herbert Read's implied contention that nowadays a critic of literature must needs be a psycho-analyst too.

Mr. George Keyt is a young Ceylonese, and this slender book of prose-poems is his first output in the line. Considered as such the book is certainly not devoid of merit. But then one pertinent and persistent question naturally arises. Can ultra-sophisticated prose be

called a fit medium of poetry? And, for that matter, is it possible to give that much misused name to mere complicated patterns of thought? We are inclined to doubt.

Let us now consider a few points in the book itself.

This world of reality and limitations irritates the poet. He would rather

“ . . . retreat in order to travel to another place

Where the things that are seen are known to be shadows.”

Elsewhere he speaks of “reality which does not exist.” This reality-idea seems to be his pet hobby-horse. He takes great pains to declare that “to be liberated from reality” one ought to attach importance not to one’s own self but to “the mirror”. For, says the poet, it is

“ . . . in the reflection of visibility,

In the mirror which presents and in the captured sound

That a thing is seen.”

From the above it is clear that Mr. Keyt puts more importance on the impressions of facts than on the facts themselves. Such imageries may be gnarled and twisted out of shape to fit in with the particular mould of his own mind. He does not care. If he were a painter he would do great credit to the “*Sur-realist*” school.

The book, as we have said, is not devoid of merit. The author’s impassioned and at the same time well-restrained prose style very nearly borders good verse in certain places. When Mr. Keyt takes leave of his “ego” to write something absolutely impersonal, notably in his poems on Nature, he is really good. The following lines describe a sunset on a sullen and sultry evening.

“The Sun keeps descending in its motionless way,

And along the hills, very quietly,

A long line of clouds, dark clouds, are assembled

Awaiting to submerge with death, very quietly,

The descent of the sun.”

He seems to have a keen sensibility and a sure ear for the right word, though some of his lines rather perversely violate what may still be considered good form by most readers of poetry. But then to shock people into lascivious curiosity and to be deliberately contrary, seem to be the peculiar privilege of modern intellectuals.

Lastly we should like to suggest, in opposition to what the poet says, that “the flesh of fruit” may not be a delusion after all.

K. C. Roy.

ART AND MEDITATION : by Anagarika B. Govinda.

Published by The Allahabad Block Works, Allahabad.

Is there any relation between Art and Meditation? The man in the street would say at once, "No", because he thinks the two to be as different from each other as chalk is from cheese. Is this impression of his then wrong? The author of the book, under review, seems to hold that opinion, as is evident not only from his bracketing art with meditation in the title but also from his thesis :

"Meditation means the perfect concentration of mind and the elimination of all unessential features of the subject in question until we are fully conscious of it by experiencing reality in a particular aspect or from a particular angle of vision. Art proceeds in a similar way : while using the forms of the external world, it never tries to imitate nature but to reveal a higher reality by omitting all accidentals, thus raising the visible form to the value of a symbol, expressing a direct experience of life. . . . Art and meditation compensate and penetrate each other" (pp. 15-16).

The author has worked out the implications of his standpoint in two sections. The first part deals with the psychological and cultural background of meditation and art ; the second with experiences of meditation and their expression in painting and poetry. The latter are illustrated with twelve abstract paintings and half a dozen poems of the author-artist himself.

At the back of the author's mind there appears to be the Buddhist's belief that Art is an aid to Yoga. But may not Art be an end in itself, a Yoga of its own? Does not his making his pictures as so many "meditation problems" (p. 107) detract in some measure from their artistic quality? Does this not imply that he has superimposed, so to say, his own intellectual concept of truth or beauty of an object or experience on the picture, thus disabling the on-looker from seeing beauty or enjoying it intuitively or with that directness and depth of feeling which is the mark of a creation of art! The laymen, in any case, are inclined to agree with Shelley when he suggests that a picture, a poem, or a song should be like the song of a skylark,—*"profuse strains of unpremeditated art"* (italics ours).

Art and Meditation combines in itself an anatomy of art and a technique of thinking. It is more a philosophy of meditation than poetry of art.

G. M.

PERSIAN INFLUENCE ON HINDI : by A. P. Vajpayi.

Published by Calcutta University.

As a first attempt at an analysis of Persian influence on Hindi, the work is greatly to be commended. The 7th chapter of the book : "How the Influence is felt" is the most important. It is a detailed study of the far-reaching effects of Persian on the Hindi language, its vocabulary and grammar. The 6th chapter deals with the "Musalmāni Hindi or Urdu". In it the author describes the foreign or the moslem attitude of the Urdu poets. This would be of help to those who wish to acquaint themselves with the distinctive features of Urdu poetry. Equally important is the Appendix to the book, which is a list of about three thousand Arabic and Persian words "generally used in Hindi".

The author has not always been able to keep a detached scientific attitude in his study of the problems that such a work entails. The Introduction and the chapter on "Hindi and Urdu" are disappointing. His two main authorities : *Abū Hayat* (Urdu) and *Sakhundān-i-Faras* (Urdu), are greatly out of date. More modern works would have been of immense help.

As usual the term 'Hindi' is loosely used. He cites Amir Khusro (d. 1325 A. D.) as the first Moslem author who named the language Hindi. But Amir Khusro has called Sanskrit Hindi too, where he has compared Arabic and Persian with Sanskrit. The linguists have grouped certain vernaculars of the North into two main groups : the Eastern Hindi and Western Hindi. These Hindis contain such vernaculars as are ordinarily differentiated from Hindustani, for example, Braj Bhasha and the Awadhi. Yet these are, on linguistic grounds, Hindi. Moreover, Hindustani has two forms (i) as the vernacular of the upper Gangetic valley, and (ii) as the common polite speech mostly spoken and understood in the North. In its second form "It has several varieties," wrote Sir G. A. Grierson, "amongst which may be mentioned, Urdu, Rekhta, Dakhini and Hindi" (Ling. Sur. Vol. I. Part I. p. 146). Hindi is here a dialect of Hindustani.

No attempt has been made by the author to fix the value of these terms. He has traced Hindi through Rekhta and Arsha to be co-existent with the vedic Sanskrit, and yet, in the conclusion he observes, ". . . but Hindi has not completed even two hundred years of its life as a literary language, though as a spoken language it is older

than Urdu. This is the reason why Urdu poetry captivates the heart of its hearers and modern Hindi poetry is not fascinating and elegant to that extent. . . . Hindi writers who wish to master the art of writing must go through a course of Urdu, because some master minds have laboured to make it what it is today. . . . Unless one studies Urdu, he cannot be a master of Hindi as he will not be able to know the various stages through which it (*i. e.* Hindi) has passed" (p. 102).

The author considers the language of a community to be the standard of its own culture. "And it is according to this standard of culture that the words and ideas of foreign or native origin are brought into the language. This led Raja Lakshman Sinha to write thus : 'In my opinion Hindi and Urdu are two separate speeches. Hindi is spoken by the Hindus of this country and Urdu is the speech of Muhammadans and Persian-knowing Hindus. Hindi contains more words of Sanskrit, and Urdu of Persian and Arabic. . . . ' It is almost inconceivable that they will be one again, because the tendency is more in favour of separation than practical requirement" (p. 45-46).

One need not be so pessimistic as the author is ; for only the living elements of life can keep a language alive ; the dead elements of the past, with which the people have lost touch, will only burden the language till it sinks to death.

M. Ziauddin.

VISVA-BHARATI



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